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THE INITIALS.

VOL. I.

T H E I N I T I A L S .

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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THE INITIALS.

CHAPTER I.

THE LETTER.

ABOUT twelve years ago (before the building of the Bayrischen Hof), the Golden Stag, kept by an old and very corpulent Frenchman, of the name of Havard, was considered the very best hotel in Munich. It was there that all crowned heads and royal personages took up their abode; and many and bitter were the complaints of English families obliged to turn out of their apartments to admit of the turning in of an emperor, king, or archduke! In the month of August, however, such guests were unusual; and, accordingly, a young English traveller had remained for a week in undisturbed possession of one of the most comfortable rooms in the house; he seemed, however, thoroughly dissatisfied with it,

or with himself, walked impatiently up and down, looked long and listlessly out of the window, and then with evident effort and a stifled yawn, concluded a letter which he had previously been writing. A few lines of this letter I shall transcribe.

“I have continued to take notes most carefully of every thing I have seen or heard since I left you; but I fear, my dear sister, the Travels, or Wanderings, or Sketches with which I intended to astonish the world on my return home, must be given up; for in the present day one can travel from London to Jericho without a chance of seeing any thing not already succinctly described in the guide-books! I thought I had discovered why my brother John never met with any amusing adventures when my father sent him abroad; he spoke wretched French and no German: poor fellow, I did him great injustice! For even I, who from not being the first born, have a sort of natural claim to intellect, — even I, who have studied German for six years, and can speak French fluently, — even I, must write stupid commonplace letters, and acknowledge that composing a book is not so easy as I thought! I left home three weeks ago, and excepting that lucky explosion of the steam engine, after we left Co-

logne, nothing has occurred worthy of notice. I must endeavour to get among these Germans; for travelling through a country without becoming intimate with some of the inhabitants, though it may enable me to judge of the beauty of the scenery, will leave me perfectly unacquainted with the manners and habits of the people. The Erskines are not here at present, so all hopes from that quarter are at an end. I am told that the Munich world is in the country, and I believe it; for nothing can be more deserted-looking than the streets which represent the *west* end! After all one cannot go on for ever looking at pictures and statues, &c."

The young man folded up and sealed his letter, with a look of infinite vexation, and putting it in his pocket while he murmured something about "taking it himself to the post-office for want of other occupation," he slowly left the room and sauntered down the staircase, drawing his cane along the iron stair-railing as he went.

Hamilton, on his return, sprang lightly up the stairs, followed by a waiter who lit the candles and prepared to assist him in taking off his rather tightly-fitting coat. The operation had proceeded about half way when his eyes fell on a letter which was placed conspicuously on the table. In

a moment the coat was again on his shoulders and the letter in his hand.

“When did this come?”

“To-day, Sir: Mr. Havard desired me to say, it was carried by mistake to a gentleman’s room who left this morning early.”

Hamilton hastily opened the letter, and read as follows:—

“DEAR MR. HAMILTON, — I have this moment read your name among the arrivals in Munich, and write to tell you that we are for the present at Seon, a short journey distant from you. Our house is not at present habitable, and we have made this old monastery our head-quarters. It was some years ago a tolerably frequented bath, but, being no longer so, I shall have no difficulty whatever in procuring an apartment for you. We shall be delighted to see you, and show you the beauties of our neighbourhood; — perhaps, too, we can arrange a tour in the Tyrol together. John I know has joined his regiment, therefore I do not expect to see him, but probably Mrs. Hamilton is with you, in which case I am quite sure you will not leave Germany without having visited your sincere friend,

“A. Z.”

"How far is Seon from Munich? What sort of a place is it?" asked Hamilton.

"I am sorry I cannot give you any information, sir. Since I have been here no traveller has left for Seon."

"Is there no mail or stage-coach to any place near it? There must be a post-town, or something of that sort."

"I really do not know, sir."

"Try and decipher the post-mark," said Hamilton, impatiently handing him the envelope.

"I think it is Altenmarkt, but I am not quite sure."

"Give me my maps, if you please, and tell Mr. Havard I wish to speak to him for a few minutes."

When he had left the room, Hamilton turned the letter in every possible direction, examined the seal, which was a small coronet with the initials "A. Z.," read it five or six times over, and in thought mustered his tolerably numerous acquaintance. Not an "A. Z." among them all! How very provoking! "And yet the letter may be intended for me," he murmured, twisting it round his fingers: "It is not impossible that the writer may have thought that I was travelling with my aunt — why not? And John has

actually joined his regiment very lately! — or — or — it may be some friend of my father's; in which case, as I do not know the name, and cannot explain by letter, I consider it a sort of duty to go to Seon, and in his name thank the good-natured person for the invitation. But what if it were not intended either for me or for my father? No matter. The letter is addressed to A. Hamilton, Esq.; if the writer intended it for an Abraham, an Achilles, or an Anthony, the fault is not mine. Alfred also begins with A.; the address is to the Golden Stag; my correspondent has seen my name or my father's in the newspapers; — mentions my mother and my brother. What more can I require?"

And Hamilton required nothing more, for on this occasion he was disposed to be easily satisfied. Besides, he was not going to force himself upon any person or persons unknown, he was merely going to Seon instead of Kissingen. Seon was also a place of public resort, quite as desirable for him as any other; nor could he see anything wrong in making some inquiries about this A. Z. when he arrived there.

Mr. Havard entered his room just as he had resolved what course he should pursue. "Pray,

Mr. Havard, can you tell me how far Seon is from here ?”

“ A day’s journey, if you travel with a voiturier ; half a day with post-horses.”

“ If I engage a voiturier — are the carriages good ?”

“ Generally, especially if you don’t require much place for luggage. I think I can procure a light carriage and tolerable horses for you.”

“ Thank you. To-morrow morning, at six o’clock, I should like to be off, if possible.”

An unpleasant idea just then occurred to him, and it required an effort on his part to add, with affected indifference—

“ By the by, Mr. Havard, perhaps you can tell me if there have been any persons here lately whose names were the same as mine ?”

Mr. Havard looked puzzled.

“ My name is Hamilton.”

“ Hameeltone — Hameeltone !” he repeated thoughtfully. “ We have a great many Hameeltone in our book. You shall see directly. I will send it to you.”

“ So,” muttered Hamilton, as he walked up and down the room—“ so after all the letter was not intended for me or my father ! This is in consequence of having such a common name ! And yet

the name in itself is good, but the Hamiltons have multiplied so unconscionably of late that I have no doubt we shall in time be quite as numerous as the Smiths! Should, however, no Hamilton have been here for the last week or ten days, I conceive that I have a right to appropriate this letter, for A. Z. says distinctly that he or she had that moment seen my name among the arrivals in Munich, and with every allowance for irregularity of post in an out-of-the-way place, chance, or unexpected delays, reference at least is made to some paper of a tolerably recent date. "Oh! thank you," he exclaimed, hurrying towards the waiter, who at that moment entered the room with the strangers' book. "Before you go, show me the name of the gentleman into whose room my letter was taken by mistake."

He pointed to the name of "Alex. Hambledon, from London."

Hamilton turned back the leaves, six, eight, ten days, and no Hamilton, before that time, as Mr. Havard had said, "A great many Hamiltons." He wished them, their families, and suites very agreeable journeys, closed the book, put A. Z.'s letter carefully into his writing-case, and after having desired the waiter to call him very early the next day, hurried to bed.

The next morning proved fine, and Hamilton felt in better spirits than he had done since he had left home, for he flattered himself that he was now about to diverge from the traveller's beaten path, and had a chance of seeing something new. The rather shabby carriage and sleepy-looking horses had not power to discompose him, and the voiturier, with his dark-blue linen blouse and short pipe, overshadowed by a bush of mustache, he thought absolutely picturesque. Most careful he seemed too of his horses, for they had scarcely left the suburbs of Munich when he descended from his box to walk up a small acclivity, and Hamilton then began to protest vehemently, but in vain, against the carriage being closed. The coachman continued to walk leisurely on, while he assured his impatient employer that he had purposely so arranged it, to prevent his being annoyed by the dust or sun, and that from the open sides he could see quite as much as would be agreeable of the flat country through which they were to travel.

"Is, then, the country so very ugly?" asked Hamilton, anticipating nothing less than an American prairie.

"Flat—very flat; but in the evening we shall have the mountains nearer."

"You seem fond of the mountains?"

"I am a Tyrolean, and used to them. Life is not the same thing in these plains," he answered, cracking his whip, but not touching his horses.

"A Tyrolean!" exclaimed Hamilton; "oh, then, you can sing your national songs, of course. Do pray let me hear one of them."

"What's the use," he said, shrugging his shoulders; "there's no echo for the jodel."

"No matter, try it at all events, and you shall have an additional glass of beer at dinner time."

On the strength of this promise he "lifted up his voice in song," and shouted out a melody which there was no manner of doubt would have been "by distance made more sweet," but which, as he leaned on the door of the carriage, and poured the whole force of his stentorian lungs into Hamilton's face, almost made him vibrate on his seat.

"Thank you," cried Hamilton, hastily—"thank you—that will do. I have long wished to hear a Tyrolean jodel, and am sure it must sound very well—in the mountains!"

"There's no music like it in the world," said the man, as he seated himself again on the box, and laying aside his pipe, he continued singing for more than an hour, interrupted only by an occasional "Ho—he—hot!" addressed to his horses.

The country was indeed flat but highly cultivated, and thickly wooded alternately,—the absence of all walls or fences giving to German scenery in general the appearance of a domain: they passed through, and saw in the distance, many pretty villages, while the mountains were becoming more distinct, and the scenery more interesting every hour. Had not the day been intensely sultry, Hamilton would have insisted on the head of the carriage being thrown back, and the odious rattling windows opposite to him being removed; as it was, however, the shade was agreeable, and the almost imperceptible current of air, produced by the motion of the carriage, as it blew on his face, had the somniferous effect attributed to the Vampire's wing—he slept, and so soundly, that until the carriage stopped suddenly before a house on the roadside, not all the jolting and consequent thumping of his head against the hard side of the carriage could waken him; he then rubbed his eyes, stretched out his legs, and was endeavouring once more to compose himself to sleep, when the coachman informed him that they were to remain there two hours to rest and dine. He looked at his watch—it was twelve o'clock—then at the inn: it did not promise much; but near the door he caught a glimpse of a carriage in

form and colour exactly resembling his own, containing, however, a number of packages which denoted female travellers. The blue band-boxes and embroidered bags decided his movements. He sprang from the carriage, and almost unconsciously ran his fingers through his hair as he entered the house. Passing through a large room filled with peasants, he reached a smaller apartment containing some narrow tables, furnished at each side with benches covered with black leather cushions. At one of these tables sat three ladies, and an equal number of little boys. Hamilton had learned to bow civilly on entering a room, to any persons who might be in it; after which, he generally contrived to commence a conversation, and let people know that he was an Englishman; having ascertained that being one was a sort of recommendation, or, at least, an excuse for all sorts of eccentricity. On the present occasion his bow was returned, but no further notice taken; scarcely even a look bestowed on him; this was, however, not at all what he wished, for two of the party were young and remarkably pretty.

She who seemed to be the mother of the children, a tall gaunt person, had her head and chin bound up with a large pocket-handkerchief,

and seemed to be suffering from toothache, which rather puzzled Hamilton, when he had discovered that she had apparently lost all her teeth, though by no means old, as appeared from her fresh coloured features and hair untinged with grey. The other two were very young and perfect personifications of German beauty—blue eyes, blooming cheeks, red lips, and a profusion of brown hair most classically braided and platted. That they were sisters scarcely admitted of a doubt, so remarkable was their resemblance to each other—a nearer inspection made it equally evident that one was much handsomer than the other. They were both tall and very slightly formed, and their dark cotton dresses were made and put on with an exactness that proved they were not indifferent to the advantages bestowed on them by Nature.

Hamilton stood at the window an object of interest, as it seemed, to no one excepting the three little boys, who with their mouths full of roast chicken, turned round on their chairs to stare at him, notwithstanding the repeated admonitions of their mother, enforced by an occasional shake of the shoulder. The young ladies, to Hamilton's infinite astonishment, took the chicken bones in their fingers, and detached the

meat from them with their teeth! He felt at once convinced that they were immeasurably vulgar, thereby forming an erroneous conclusion very common on the part of his travelling countrymen, who are not aware that the mode of eating is in Germany no such exact criterion of manners as in England. His dinner was now ready, and as he seated himself at the table one of his pretty neighbours glanced shyly towards him in a manner that proved he had not been so unobserved as he imagined. With all the vanity of youth he determined in his turn to play indifference, traced diligently his route on the map which he had placed beside him, and made inquiries about Seon. The lady with the bound-up head tapped at the window, and asked her coachman if he were ready to put to the horses; the answer was indistinct, but the words "late enough" and "Seon" reached Hamilton's ears. Bonnets, gloves, and handkerchiefs were sought, and the children given in charge to their maid to be packed into the carriage.

"I think we had better get in with the boys and arrange ourselves comfortably," observed the elder lady, following them out of the room.

"Comfort!" exclaimed one of the girls in a melancholy voice as she tied on her bonnet;

"comfort is quite out of the question. I wish with all my heart we were at Seon! On such a day as this seven in a carriage is any thing but agreeable!"

"I should not mind," answered the other, half-laughing, "if Peppy did not insist on sitting on my knee; he kicks so incessantly that I suffered tortures on my way here."

Hamilton advanced towards the speakers, and observed that he was travelling to the same place, and his carriage was quite at their service. They blushed, and one of them seemed disposed to laugh, which encouraged him to add, that he would promise to be perfectly quiet and on no pretence whatever to kick! Either his words or manner, or both, perhaps, displeased them, for, having exchanged looks, they murmured something unintelligible, and hastily left the room. He followed and saw them get into their carriage, which was already more than sufficiently filled with children and boxes; the maid endeavoured to follow, but was obliged to remain long in the door-way while a place was being prepared for her. Wishing to prove that he had made his proposition with the intention of being civil, he now approached the party and addressed the elder lady — told her he was going to Seon, was travelling

alone, had scarcely any luggage, and had places for as many persons and parcels as she chose to transfer to his carriage. She thanked him, and hesitatingly regretted that her "boys" were so unmanageable—perhaps he would be so kind as to give her maid a place. This was not exactly what Hamilton had intended, nevertheless he acceded with a good grace, and assisted the spruce-looking servant girl to descend. One of the boys instantly commenced roaring, and declared he must and would go with her—he was lifted out of the carriage, and, with many apologies, Hamilton was asked to take charge of Peppy the kicker! But Peppy was not yet satisfied, he insisted so vociferously on his sister, "Crescenz," accompanying him, that his mother was at length obliged to consent, and when Hamilton looked at the pretty blushing face of this new addition to his party, he thought her mother's apologies not only tiresome but quite unnecessary. He had to wait some time before his coachman thought proper to depart, and made an attempt to express the pleasure he felt at having obtained so desirable a travelling companion, but the fair Crescenz seemed so overcome with *mauvaise honte*, that he thought it advisable for the present to avoid all conversation. When once

fairly off, he rummaged out a couple of books, offered her one, and took the other himself. This proceeding seemed to surprise her, but had the effect he wished of making her feel less embarrassed. She turned over the leaves with a listlessness which at once convinced him that she was no reader, and he ventured to make a few remarks. The answers were at first merely monosyllables, but they required explanation, for he purposely misunderstood her. One subject of conversation led to another, and in about an hour they were talking as if they had been acquainted for months. She informed him that her father had a situation which scarcely ever admitted of his leaving Munich. That she and her sister had lost their mother when they were mere children, and they had been sent to school when their father had married again. They had returned home but a few weeks ago, and their step-mother having been ordered change of air, had chosen Seon, because the baths there had been of use to her on a former occasion. They had been very happy to leave school, and were equally happy to go to the country — especially to Seon.

“And why especially to Seon?” asked Hamilton.

“Oh, because I have heard so much of it from one of my school-friends.”

"Perhaps, then, you can give me some information. I have not the least idea what sort of a place it is."

"I believe it is a great old monastery, with long corridors, where one might expect to meet the ghosts of the monks stalking about—and the windows look into dark courts—and on a moonlight night it is quite romantic walking in the cloisters!"

"And did your friend wander about quite alone and by moonlight in such a place!"

"Oh, she was not *alone*," said Crescenz, smiling and shaking her head slyly.

"So I imagined — probably her mother or her sister walked with her."

"Her mother was not there, and her brother-in-law would not allow her sister to walk by moonlight."

"What a barbarian he must have been! Who, then, could have been her companion? It could hardly have been her father?"

Crescenz laughed outright. "Oh no; had it been her father Lina would not have been sent back to school again. They said she had done all sorts of wild things at home; that her head was full of nonsense, and she must be cured."

"And was she cured?"

"I suppose so, for some time after she left us

again she married an ugly old doctor. Oh he is so ugly! His chin sticks out *so!*" In explanation she thrust out her full red underlip, forming thereby a better personification of a pretty, naughty child than an ugly old doctor. "I was allowed to be her bridesmaid," she continued, "and as I knew all about Theodor, I asked her if she really were as happy as she seemed to be? And, can you believe it?—she said that all the fine things she had told me of Seon and first love was stuff and nonsense,—that she had invited Theodor to her wedding and intended to dance with him in the evening!"

"In fact the affair with Theodor was merely a flirtation," observed Hamilton.

"I don't know what that means," she answered, looking inquiringly in his face; "it is an English word, I suppose."

"Quite English," said Hamilton, laughing, "but your friend seems to have understood the meaning perfectly."

"And yet she did not take any lessons in English," said Crescenz, thoughtfully, "but I remember her saying to me at school, that if she could not marry Theodor she would go into a nunnery! And then to be satisfied with ugly old Doctor Berger!"

"You would not have acted so?" inquired Hamilton.

She was about to answer when her eye caught that of the servant opposite to them, she coloured and remained silent. Hamilton had long thought this personage a bore, although she had been too much occupied with little master Peppy to have heard much of their conversation. It suddenly, however, occurred to him to repeat his question in French, and this removed all difficulties, for the young lady spoke so remarkably fluently that the conversation proceeded more flowingly than before. From the specimen given, it may be supposed that a sufficient quantity of nonsense was talked; however, they contrived to amuse themselves so well that they actually drove up to the door of the *ci-devant* monastery, without having seen even a chimney to warn them that their journey was drawing to a close. Crescenz's stepmother was waiting to receive them, and overwhelmed Hamilton with thanks, while he, taken completely by surprise, had only time to whisper hurriedly to his travelling companion—"I shall certainly see you again, even if I should decide on leaving Seon to-morrow," and as he assisted her out of the carriage, he added, "We positively must try the cloisters by moonlight."

But no answering smile played round her coral lips. Crescenz seemed metamorphosed. No sooner had her feet touched the ground than one glided gently behind the other, and a profound curtsy, such as very young ladies are taught to make by a dancing-master, was performed to his infinite astonishment; a few neat and appropriate words of thanks were added, which, had they not been accompanied by a burning blush, he would have considered the most consummate piece of acting he had ever witnessed. Hamilton bit his lip and coloured deeply as he mechanically followed the landlady through a side-door into the monastery.

He was conducted up a back staircase to a long corridor, at the end of which was a small passage leading into a tolerably large cheerful room, to his great disappointment not bearing any perceptible marks of antiquity. On expressing some surprise he was told that the Monastery had been twice almost burnt to the ground, and that only some parts of the original building remained. His room was the most modern of all, and had been the apartment of the Abbot, before the secularization.

“Have you many people staying here at present?” asked Hamilton.

"Not many; several left this morning, but we expect others next week."

"And the names of those who are still here?" asked Hamilton in considerable alarm.

"Still here," repeated the landlady, but at this instant the sounds of wheels and horses' hoofs made Hamilton rush to one of the windows. A small open carriage and its dust-covered occupant attracted his attention so completely, that, without waiting for an answer to his former question, he added, "Who is that?"

"Ah, the Herr Baron!" cried the landlady looking out of the window, and then quickly leaving the room.

The traveller started up in the carriage and looked round him. He was dressed in a sort of loose shooting jacket of grey cloth, which completely concealed his figure, and his dark green felt hat was slouched over his face, leaving little visible excepting the mustache, surmounted by a well-formed aquiline nose. "Is no one here?" he cried, exhibiting some very unequivocal signs of impatience, and a servant in plain livery came at full speed, followed by half a dozen men and women, who were soon all employed unpacking the carriage. Carpet-bag, meerschaum pipes of different forms and dimensions, newspapers, cigar-

cases, boots, powder-horn, umbrella, double-barrelled gun, sketch-book, a very old pistol, a very new rifle, and some rolls of bread, followed each other in odd confusion. Some one at a window not distant from Hamilton, laughed heartily; the traveller looked up, laughed also, and flourished his hat in the air. "What a dusty figure!" exclaimed the invisible. "Have you brought no trophy? No venison for our landlady?"

"The chamois hunt was unsuccessful, although I remained out all night; but my new rifle performed wonders at the *Scheiben schiessen*."

Another laugh from the window made him seize his rifle and jestingly point it upwards—it was, however, directly thrown aside, while he half apologetically exclaimed, "It cannot go off, I assure you. Look here, it is not even loaded," and he grasped the ramrod to prove his assertion; but some unexpected impediment in the barrel caused him to grow suddenly red—he raised the offending weapon as if with the intention of firing it off, but after a hasty glance towards the window, he gave it to one of the bystanders, requesting him to draw out the charge, and then ran quickly into the house.

In the meantime Hamilton's coachman had brought up his luggage, and a chambermaid

waited to know whether or not he intended to sup below stairs. Supper would be in the little room through which he had passed on his entrance, as there were too few people for the saloon. Perhaps he wished to sup in his own room?

"By no means, I always prefer a *table-d'hôte*. Pray, can you tell me the names of some of the people here? I may, perhaps, have an acquaintance among them."

"Major Stultz, from Munich. The family who have just arrived are the Rosenburgs, from—"

"I know—I know," cried Hamilton, nodding his head.

"Then there is Mr. Schmearer, landscape-painter, and Count Zedwitz — his wife and daughter—"

"Who do you say?" asked Hamilton, suddenly recollecting A. Z.

"Count Zedwitz and the countess, and—"

"Can they speak English?"

"Oh, no doubt; and French, too, quite perfectly: they speak a great many languages."

"They are not, however, invalids? That is, they are not here on account of the baths?"

"No; I believe they came to meet some friends whom they had intended to have visited. I heard the count's servant saying that their

house, or the baron's, was full of masons and painters."

"Ah! exactly—"

"But the old countess does take baths," continued the chambermaid, "and finds great benefit from them, too. The count is a favourer of Preissnitz and the Water Cure; and when he does not go to Graefenberg all places are alike to him where water is good and in abundance."

"And his daughter?" asked Hamilton, now convinced that he had found A. Z.

"Oh, his daughter springs from her bed every morning into a tub of cold water with a great sponge in it, to please him, but I never heard of her having sweated, or—"

"Her having what?"

"Sweated! The count sent his bed and tubs here the day before he came, and his servant Pepperl, must tie him up every morning."

"You never heard of mademoiselle's being tied up by Pepperl?" asked Hamilton, gravely.

"I believe she never had the rheumatism; but one day when she had a headache I saw her sitting with her feet in a tub of cold water, and wet towels round her head."

Some one just then knocked gently at the door. "Come in!" cried Hamilton, and to his no small

surprise Crescenz appeared in the doorway. She blushed, and so did he, and then he blushed because he had blushed; and to conceal his annoyance he assumed a cold, haughty manner, and waited for her to speak. She stammered something about a reticule and pocket-handkerchief, as with the assistance of the chambermaid she moved his carpet-bag, and shook his cloak in every possible direction. Nothing was to be found, and she was just about to leave the room when Hamilton perceived the lost property under his dressing-case. As he restored it, and held the door open for her to pass, he took advantage of the opportunity, and returned her former curtsy with an obeisance so profound that it amounted to mockery, and as such she felt it, too, for the colour mounted through the roots of her hair, suffusing with deep red both neck and ears as she bent down her head, and hurried out of the room followed by the chambermaid. Hamilton was so shocked at his rudeness, that he felt greatly inclined to run after her and apologize; and had she been alone he would certainly have done so, for it directly occurred to him that she had come herself to seek her handkerchief in order to have an opportunity of explaining to him the cause of her sudden and extraordinary change of manner. This made him

still more repent his puerile conduct, and wish he had spoken to her. He looked out of the window to see if he were likely to meet her should he perambulate the much-talked of cloister, but instead of the rising moon, angry thunder-clouds were rapidly converting the remaining twilight into darkest night. His hopes of a romantic interview and explanation were at an end; there was no chance of moonlight, and the acquaintance was much too new to think of a meeting in thunder and lightning! The supper-table seemed a more eligible place, and spurred both by contrition and hunger, he determined to repair to it with all possible expedition.

On leaving the small passage conducting to his room, he entered the long corridor which he had traversed with the landlady; on turning, however, as he thought to the staircase by which he had ascended, he suddenly found himself in a small but lofty chapel. It was too dark to see distinctly the decorations of the altar, but it seemed as if gilding had not been spared; two small adjoining apartments he next examined, and then completely forgetting whether he had entered from the right or left hand, he walked inquisitively forward until a broad, gloomy passage, brought him to a corridor, which he instinctively felt to be the

place where on moonlight nights one might perchance be disposed for romance. The doors opposite to him, placed close to each other, had probably belonged to cells; over each was a black-looking picture, portraits of the abbots, the faces and hands looking most ghastly in their indistinctness. A broad staircase was near, but fearing to lose his way completely, he contented himself for the present with reconnoitring the garden and a lake from a sort of lobby window. Woods and mountains were in the distance, but every moment becoming less distinct; the oppressive calm had been succeeded by a wild wind which bent the trees in all directions and ruffled the surface of the water. Interested in the approaching thunder-storm, he stood at the window until his reverie was interrupted by the sound of footsteps, voices, and the clapping of doors. He turned quickly from the window, walked to the end of the corridor, turned to the left, and entered a very narrow passage looking into a small quadrangular court, which seemed once to have been a garden; it still possessed a few trees, a fountain, and a luxuriant growth of rank grass. He mounted a flight of stone steps which brought him into the organ loft, from whence he had a full view of the monastery church. The lamp which hung

suspended before the altar threw fitful gleams of light on the objects in its immediate vicinity—all the rest was in shadow; behind the organ was a sort of vaulted, unfinished room, containing nothing but a most clumsy apparatus for filling the bellows. Just as he was about to leave this uninteresting place two persons entered the adjoining loft; recognizing the voice of his travelling companion, and perceiving that she was accompanied by her sister, he commenced a precipitate retreat by another entrance than that next the organ; in his haste, however, he entangled his foot in the rope communicating with the belfry, so that his slightest movement might alarm the whole household. While endeavouring, as well as the darkness would permit, to extricate himself, he was compelled to become auditor of a conversation certainly not intended for his ears.

“And you don’t think him at all good-looking?” asked Crescenz.

“I cannot say that his appearance particularly pleased me, but you know I only saw him eating his dinner; he seemed, however, to have an uncommonly good opinion of himself!”

“At all events,” said Crescenz, “it was very obliging of him to take us in his carriage. I am

sure if *you* had travelled with him instead of me, you would think quite differently."

"Dear Crescenz ! I have no doubt that he was agreeable, as you say so; and I agree with you in thinking him very civil, and all that sort of thing, but you cannot force me to think him handsome !"

"I did not say that I thought him handsome," cried Crescenz, deprecatingly.

"No ! Something very like it, then. Let me see, hum — a — most interesting person you ever saw; brilliant dark eyes with long eye-lashes; magnificent teeth, beautiful mouth, refined manners, and ever so much more ! Now, I think him an effeminate looking, supercilious boy, and —"

"Oh, I might have foreseen," cried Crescenz, interrupting her sister, "I might have foreseen that he would find no favour in your eyes, as he is not an officer with a long sword clattering at his side."

"Sword or no sword," answered the other, laughing, "he would not look like anything but an overgrown school-boy, perhaps a student, or—or an embryo *attaché* to an embassy."

Hamilton's blush of annoyance was concealed by the darkness.

"I intended," began Crescenz, hesitatingly, "I

intended to have told you something, but you seem to be so prejudiced against him that—”

“Prejudiced! Not in the least. I do not think him particularly handsome, that’s all!”

“Well, you know I told you we talked a great deal during our journey, and — and a — in short, just as we reached Seon he said something about meeting me in the corridor by moonlight.”

“Just what I should have expected from him!” cried the other, angrily. “How presuming on so short an acquaintance!”

“He is an Englishman,” said Crescenz, apologetically; “and certainly did not mean any thing wrong, for his manner did not change in the least when he saw Mamma, while I was so dreadfully afraid she might observe— Oh! Hildegarde! What is that? Did you not hear something moving?”

“I think I did: let us listen.” A pause ensued. “It’s only the thunder-storm, and” — taking a long breath — “the ticking of the great clock.”

“How like some one breathing heavily,” exclaimed Crescenz, anxiously.

“And how dark it is! We can hardly find our way out,” said Hildegarde.

Hamilton did not venture to move; they were

so near him that he heard the hands feeling the way on the wall close to where he stood. One reached the narrow passage in safety, the other stumbled on the stairs; and, as Hamilton unconsciously made a movement to assist her, the lightning, which had once or twice enabled him to distinguish their figures, now rendered him for a moment visible. It was in vain he again drew back into his hiding-place. With a cry of terror Crescenz raised herself from the ground and rushed into her sister's arms, exclaiming, "I have seen him! I have seen him! He is here!"

"What! Who is here?"

"The Englishman! The Englishman!"

"Impossible! How can you be so foolish? Come, come! let us leave this place."

"I saw him, and the lightning played upon his face, and he looked as if he were dead. I saw him, indeed I saw him!" cried Crescenz, sobbing frantically.

"Crescenz—dear Crescenz!" said her sister, vainly endeavouring to calm her.

Hamilton was inexpressibly shocked, and conceiving his actual presence would relieve her mind from the fear of having seen something supernatural. He came forward and explained, as well as he could, the cause of his being there. In

the excess of his anxiety he seized her hand, called her Crescenz, and talked he knew not what nonsense. Her efforts to control her emotion were desperate. She forced a laugh, but the attempt ended in a scream, which echoed wildly through the building.

"Crescenz! Crescenz! have you lost your senses?" cried her sister. "You will bring the whole house about us!"

Her words seemed likely to be verified, for lights began to glimmer in all directions.

"Mamma will come, and we may make up our minds to return to Munich to-morrow," cried Hildegarde impatiently.

Hamilton's situation now became uncomfortable; it was, to say the least, not favourable for a first appearance among strangers, and the thought that "A. Z." might be among them was so overpowering that he stood perfectly petrified, and still unconsciously holding Crescenz's hand. "As to you, the Englishman," continued Hildegarde, angrily, "your standing there can only increase our embarrassment. Begone! It is still possible for you to escape observation."

He turned mechanically towards the organ-loft.

"Not there! Not there!" she cried vehemently.

"One would really think you a fool!"

Roused by this somewhat uncivil observation, Hamilton asked, in about as gentle a tone of voice as her own, "Where the d—l shall I go, then, Mademoiselle? You don't wish me to face all those lights, do you?"

"Go! go! go!" she cried with increased violence, and stamping the ground with her foot. "You can cross the corridor before they reach the entrance to this passage."

He ran, crossed the passage, stumbled up two or three steps to a door, which charitably yielded to his hand, and afforded him a retreat into — the church — for there he was again! Now completely confused, and feeling as if under the influence of nightmare, he threw himself into a seat and covered his face with his hands. Steps and inquiring voices came nearer and nearer. He heard scolding, wondering, expostulating; then all was quiet, and only Crescenz's subdued sobs reached his ear. All at once, to his no small dismay, the church became lighted; some persons with candles were in the organ-loft opposite to him; he could see them, however, in tolerable security, for his place of refuge proved to be the enclosed gallery formerly occupied by the monks. In the meantime the storm had increased, one flash of lightning was followed so immediately by thunder

so loud that it seemed to shake the very foundations of the monastery. It served to disperse the assembly, for Hamilton heard soon after the retreating steps passing the door of the gallery, the opening and shutting of several doors, voices lost in the distance, and all was again still. He waited merely to assure himself that no one was in the way, and then cautiously commenced his retreat. A juvenile reminiscence made him smile as he now moved from his hiding-place; he remembered the time when he had hoped his "new boots would creak," and had even tampered with the boot-maker's apprentice when he had been so lucky as to have his measure taken without witnesses. And now, what would he not have given for a pair of slippers or anything but creaking boots! He had scarcely made six strides on tiptoe when a door opened and a head protruded itself. He trusted to the darkness for concealment, and leaned against the wall; the head had no sooner disappeared than, seizing the favourable moment, he rushed into a dark passage and ran, unconscious whether he turned right or left, until he reached a large open window. He looked out and saw the traveller's little green carriage being pushed towards the coach-house. Here was a sort of compass to steer by; his windows had the same aspect,

ergo, that door must lead to his room. Before, however, he undertook another expedition, he thought it prudent to get a light. This caused a few minutes' delay; and when he again sallied forth he seemed destined to be more fortunate. Hildegarde and her stepmother walked before him, as if to point the way. They disappeared at the end of the passage, and he quickened his steps in order to overtake them on the stairs. The latter was speaking loudly, it seemed in continuation of a previous discourse. "You may rest assured that your father shall have a full account of the whole affair. Such a disgraceful scene! Count Zedwitz sent his servant to inquire what was the matter, and recommended immersion in cold water. A good ducking would have most effectually quieted Crescenz's nerves, and I shall certainly try it next time. My health is not likely to be much benefited by a residence here, if I have to act *duenna* to you and your sister! Remember, I strictly forbid your walking in these passages after sunset in future. Do you hear?"

"Yes, Madame."

"As to Crescenz being so afraid of lightning, that 's all nonsense! I should like to know if all the young ladies at school, scream in that manner whenever they see a flash of lightning!"

"The thunder was very loud," began Hildegard, "and besides, you have not heard that she saw——."

"Well, well," cried her mother, interrupting her, to Hamilton's great satisfaction, "Thunder or lightning—or both—there was no occasion for such a noise, and I give you warning that the very first time I have cause to be dissatisfied with you or your sister, back you shall go to school. Health is my object at present, and every irritation of the nerves has been expressly forbidden by my medical adviser!"

To this speech no answer was made, and Hamilton followed them at a distance into the supper-room. He had lost so much time in the organ-loft, that almost all the guests were already gone. The traveller, whose arrival he had witnessed, was in the act of lighting a cigar with which he immediately left the room. An elderly, red-faced, stout gentleman, with a tankard of beer beside him, he soon discovered to be Major Stultz—nor did it require much penetration to recognize Mr. Schmearer, the painter, in the emaciated sentimental-looking young man beside whom he seated himself. Hildegard and her stepmother were nearly opposite; the former, after bestowing on Hamilton a look which

might appropriately have accompanied a box on the ear, fixed her eyes on the table; the latter bowed most graciously, and commenced an interesting conversation about the weather, the barometer, and her dislike to thunder-storms in general. When these topics had been completely exhausted, Hamilton hoped something might be said of the present inmates of Seon, but a long and tiresome discussion on the merits of summer and winter-beer followed. Strauss's beer was delicious—Bock had been particularly good this year.—“Bock,” cried Major Stultz, enthusiastically, “Bock is better than champagne! Bock is—” Here he looked up with an impassioned air to the ceiling, and kissed the two first fingers of his right hand, flourishing them in the air afterwards. Words, it seems, were inadequate to express the merits of this beverage.

“Did you see that picture at the Kunstverein* in Munich, representing a glass of foaming bock, with the usual accessories of bread and radishes?” asked Mr. Schmearer. “It was exquisitely painted! I believe his Majesty purchased it.”

“There is some sense in such a picture as that,” answered Major Stultz. “I went two or

* Society of Arts.

three times to see it; and could scarcely avoid stretching out my hand to feel if it were not some deception."

"A judicious management of reflected lights produces extraordinary effect in the representation of fluids," observed Mr. Schmearer.

A pause ensued. Major Stultz did not seem disposed to discuss reflected lights, the picture had evidently had no value for him, excepting as a good representation of a glass of bock, and his attention was now directed towards Hildegarde, whose flushed cheeks and pouting lips rather heightened than detracted from her beauty.

"Perhaps you would like to see the newspapers, madam?" he asked, politely offering the latest arrived to her stepmother.

"Thank you; I never read newspapers, though I join some acquaintances in taking the *Eilbote*, on condition that it comes to us last of all, and then we can keep the paper for cleaning the looking-glasses and windows."

"There are, however, sometimes very pretty stories and charades in the *Eilbote*. Young ladies like such things," he observed, glancing significantly towards Hildegarde.

"My daughters must read nothing but French, and I have subscribed to a library for them.

Their French has occupied more than half their lives at school, and now I intend them to teach the boys."

"I should have no sort of objection to learn French from such an instructress," said the Major, gallantly.

"Indeed I don't think any one will ever learn much from her," said Madame Rosenberg, severely; "but her sister Crescenz is a good girl, and the children are very fond of her."

"You have two daughters!" exclaimed the Major.

"*Step-daughters*," she replied, drily.

"That I took for granted," he said, bowing as if he intended to be very civil. "The young ladies will be of great use to you in the house-keeping."

"That is exactly what has been neglected in their education; if they could keep a house as well as they can speak French I should be satisfied. When we return to Munich they must both learn cookery. I intend afterwards to give the children to one, and the housekeeping to the other alternately."

"You will prepare the young ladies so well for their destination, that I suspect they will not remain long unmarried!"

"There's not much chance of that! Husbands are not so easily found for portionless daughters!" replied Madame Rosenberg, facetiously; "however, I am quite ready to give my consent should any thing good offer."

Hamilton looked at Hildegarde to see what impression this conversation had made on her. She had turned away as much as possible from the speakers, and with her head bent down seemed to watch intently the bursting of the bubbles in a glass of beer! Had it been her sister he would have thought she had chosen the occupation to conceal her embarrassment—but embarrassment was not Hildegarde's predominant feeling; her compressed lips and quick breathing denoted suppressed anger which amounted to rage, as her step-mother in direct terms asked Major Stultz if he were married, and received for answer that he was "a bachelor, at her service." With a sudden jerk, the glass was prostrated on the table, and before Hamilton could raise his arm its contents were deposited in the sleeve of his coat."

"*Pardon mille fois!*" cried Hildegarde, looking really sorry for what had occurred.

"You irritable, awkward girl!" — commenced her mother; but for some undoubtedly excellent reason, she suddenly changed her manner, and

added — “You had better go to bed, child, I see you have not yet recovered from the recent alarm in the church.”

Hildegarde rose quickly from her chair, and with a slight and somewhat haughty obeisance to the company, left the room in silence. Madame Rosenberg continued volubly to excuse her to Hamilton, and, what he thought quite unnecessary, to Major Stultz also !

The major listened with complacence, but Hamilton’s wet shirt-sleeve induced him to finish his supper as quickly as possible, and wish the company good night.

CHAPTER II.

THE INITIALS.

HAMILTON thought there were few things so disagreeable as going to bed, excepting, perhaps, getting up again. He was incorrigibly indolent in this respect, and nothing but the most fresh and beautiful of mornings, aided perhaps by the transparent muslin curtains, which had admitted every ray of light from day-break, could have induced him to get up and be dressed at six o'clock; and that, too, without any immediate object in view, for three or four hours at least must elapse before he could venture to intrude on "A. Z." He was not a little surprised to find Crescenz and her sister already in the garden, but having no inclination for a renewal of the organ-loft scene, he turned towards a row of clumsy, flat-bottomed boats, sprang into one of them, and in a few minutes was far out in the lake, where he quietly leaned upon his oars and began to look about him.

Seon was originally built upon an island, and

received its name from this circumstance, as is quaintly enough recorded in the *Introductio ad Annales Monasterii Seonensis*, of Benonne Feichtmaejr, Ejusdem Monasterii Professor : — “When God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, he threatened the earth with destruction, and said unto Noah, ‘Make thee an ark,’ &c., &c., &c. So our blessed founder, *Aribo*, seeing in what unrighteousness mankind had again fallen, resolved also to build an ark, and to receive into it not only his own household, but all others who were willing to quit the wickedness of the world and save themselves from the deluge of sin. Accordingly he changed his castle called Buerget into a monastery, under the seal of the holy patriarch Benedictus, and recommended the same to the protection of the holy martyr Lambertus. The monastery was then named Seon, as the letters composing this word being reversed form the name of *Noes* (Noah); and the monastery representing the ark appeared to float in the midst of the lake, a place of refuge for all willing to seek it.”

Of the original building of 994 nothing remains but the church, now converted into a cellar, and the cloisters; the other parts having been consumed

by fire in the year 1561. In the course of time, however, and even before the secularization of the monastery, it had been found convenient to connect Seon with the mainland by means of a road, over which Hamilton must have driven the evening before. And now, when viewed from the outside, Seon much more resembled a middle-aged German castle than a monastery. This impression it made on Hamilton, too, as he watched the numerous groups of people who had begun to enliven with their presence the pretty garden extending from it to the lake.

Crescenz and her sister continued to walk up and down, talking earnestly, and so often bestowing a look on the "overgrown school-boy," that he felt convinced he was the subject of discourse. Their brothers soon after joined them, and a very outrageous game of romps ensued between them and Crescenz. Hildegard still turned towards the lake, her eyes fixed on him and his boat. "Perhaps," he thought, with the vanity inherent to very young men — "perhaps she regrets her rudeness to me last night. I like her all the better for not playing with those unmannerly boys; and at supper, too, I observed that, although strongly resembling her sister, she is infinitely handsomer!" He rowed to the landing-place, moored the boat,

and approached her quietly ; but it did not require long to convince him that he had not been in the least degree an object of interest to her, for she still gazed on the lake, though his bark no longer floated on its surface, and not even the sound of his voice when he spoke to her sister could induce her to turn round. He looked at his watch, and found that by the time he had breakfasted he might prepare to visit A. Z., that is learn what chance he had of making a useful or agreeable acquaintance. He inquired for the landlady, and found her in the kitchen sending forth detachments of coffee and rolls to the garden. To his great surprise and pleasure, she ordered his breakfast to be carried to the arbour, where the Countess Zedwitz and her daughter were breakfasting, saying it was the only place unengaged in the whole garden. With mixed feelings of anxiety and curiosity he followed. While it was being deposited on the table, he observed that a question was asked by a comfortable-looking dowager, and the answer seemed satisfactory, for she nodded her head and then looked towards him. He bowed, and was received with a good-humoured smile. "She knows me," he thought, "and this is A. Z." It did not, in fact, signify— but—he would have preferred the daughter, who, although not in the

least pretty, had a merry expression of countenance, and looked so fresh, that he involuntarily thought of the tub of cold water out of which she had probably sprung half an hour before.

"I fear, madame, you will think me an intruder," he began with an affectation of diffidence, which he was far from feeling.

"Oh, by no mean," cried the elder lady, in English, nodding her head two or three times; "by no mean! You are an Englishman; I am ver glad to have occasion to spick Eenglish. Man lose all practice in both! I estimate me very happy to make acquaintance with you."

Hamilton assured her he felt extremely obliged—hoped, however, to prove that he had a better claim to her notice than his being an Englishman. This she did not comprehend, for, like most Germans who are learning English, she seldom understood when spoken to, and preferred continuing to talk herself, to waiting or asking for an answer in a language which she knew by sight but not by sound. Accordingly, "We have a very fine nature here!" was the reply he received to an observation which he had intended to have led to an interesting discovery of his being the son of her Munich correspondent. "We have a very fine nature here!"

Hamilton looked puzzled, or she thought him a little deaf, for she spoke louder as she said, "A very beautiful nature !"

He bowed and coloured slightly.

"Mamma will say, our prospects are very good," said the younger lady, in explanation.

"Ha !—prospects !" he repeated.

"What you call lanskip, — *paysage* ? Is not good English ? No ?"

"Oh, very good English," he answered, looking round him, prepared to admire anything or everything he could see. Now, they were in an arbour thickly covered with foliage, in order to render it impervious to the sun's rays, and the entrance being from the garden there was no view whatever deserving the name of prospect. Hamilton knew not what to say and was beginning to feel embarrassed, when the Rosenbergs luckily appeared and made a diversion in his favour. Crescenz and her sister advanced to meet their stepmother, who now entered the garden dressed in a most unbecoming dark-coloured cotton morning-gown, partly covered by an old shawl thrown negligently over her shoulders, and her hair still twisted round those odious leather things used for curling refractory ringlets.

"Who is that ?" asked the Countess, to his

great relief speaking German. "Who is that person?"

"I believe her name is Rosenberg," he answered; "she came from Munich yesterday."

"Ah, I know. That is the person who screamed in the gallery last night."

"No, mamma, it was one of her daughters who screamed."

"Oh, one of her daughters! They are very pretty," said the Countess, raising her double *lorgnette* to her eyes,—“really very pretty! and I think I have seen them somewhere before, but where I cannot recollect—”

"Oh, mamma, I know where you have seen them: they were in the same school with my cousin Thérèse, and we saw them at the examinations last year. Don't you remember the two sisters who were so like each other? And as we drove home with the Princess N——, she said that one of them was the handsomest creature she had ever seen! I think too she said she had known their mother!"

"Not that person in the odious dishabille! You are dreaming, child!"

"No, no — *their* mother was *noble* — she was a Raimond, had no fortune, and married a nobody, when she was old enough to have been wiser;

her relations never forgave her, but after her death they offered to educate these two girls for governesses: their father would not part with them; but when he afterwards married a rich goldsmith's daughter, she immediately insisted on his sending them to school."

"I believe I do remember something of this,—most probably a sister of our friend, Count Raimond, Agnes?"

"Mademoiselle's name is Agnes," said Hamilton, quickly. "Then, perhaps, you are the person who was so kind as to write me the letter which" . . . And he searched in his pocket for A. Z.'s letter.

"What!—what is that about a letter?" asked the old lady, hastily.

"Some mistake, mamma."

"But he says you wrote to him, my dear."

"No, mamma, I did not write to him; but I think it extremely probable that papa did. I know he wrote lately to an Englishman in Munich. He will be glad to see you, I am sure," she added, turning to Hamilton; "for although he speaks English very tolerably, he finds writing it extremely difficult; and the little note in question occupied him nearly an hour. When you have breakfasted I can go with you to his room."

Hamilton pushed away his coffee-cup, and stood up directly.

"Agnes, Agnes!" cried her mother, gravely, "you know your father is sweating!"

"Yes, mamma, I know; but papa wishes very much to see his English correspondent. You have, probably, just returned from Graefenberg?" she said, addressing Hamilton. "Have you no letter from Preissnitz?"

"Letters from Preissnitz! I have no letter excepting that which I received the day before yesterday from Count Zedwitz."

"You wish, perhaps, to speak to papa before you decide on going to Graefenberg?"

"I—I have no intention whatever of going there, Mademoiselle," said Hamilton, who did not exactly know who Preissnitz was, or where Graefenberg might be situated; for ten years ago Preissnitz's name was little known in Germany, and scarcely at all in England.

"Well, at all events, you had better speak to papa: I know he expects to see you."

"If that be the case," said Hamilton, "I am sure I shall be very happy to make his acquaintance—I only feared the letter might have been intended for my father, as he has foreign acquaintances, and I have as yet none."

"It is quite the same thing I should think," said the young Countess, as she led the way out of the garden. "You can let your father know that you have seen us here. Papa was only sorry that he could not receive you at home; but our house is not at present habitable, and . . ."

"Ah!" cried Hamilton, springing up the stairs after her, "that is exactly what he said in his letter."

"Wait here until I have told him that you have arrived," she said, tapping gently at one of the doors, which closed upon her immediately afterwards.

She did not return, but a tall gaunt servant appeared to conduct him to Count Zedwitz's apartment. On entering he perceived that a figure lay on a bed, but so wrapped in blankets and covered with down beds, that nothing was visible but the face, down which the perspiration rolled copiously. A reading-desk was placed on the breast, and a long quill, tightly pressed between the teeth, served to turn over the leaves of his book. Hamilton would have required some time to discover the use of the quill had it not been performing its office as he entered.

"I am rejoice to see you—very glad you have become my letter, and seem to profit by it. You are good on the feet again?"

"Thank you," said Hamilton, rather puzzled by this address, and half disposed to refuse the chair placed for him by the servant.

"You have been to Graefenberg?—No!

"No."

"You have recover without Preissnitz?"

"Recover!" repeated Hamilton; "I have never been seriously ill in my life: colds and all that sort of thing excepted—mere trifles after all!"

"Trifles! well you Englishmen have odd idea!—Rheumatism is trifle!"

"Gout is more common with us," observed Hamilton, somewhat amused.

"Well, gout, chicagra, podagra, rheumatismen, what you will, is no trifle at all! You have had the gout?"

"No; but I suppose I shall in time: it is hereditary in our family—my father has two or three attacks every year."

"Your father! Is it your father who has had the gout?"

"Yes, and I suspect my father is your correspondent, too. I really fear I am not the person you suppose me to be."

"What! what, what do you mean?" he cried, endeavouring to raise himself in his bed, and looking precisely like a writhing cadisworm.

“ I mean that I received a letter the day before yesterday, inviting me to come here ;—the seal was a coronet, and it was signed A. Z. I arrived; made inquiries, and too hastily, it seems, concluded that Count Zedwitz, or one of his family, had written to me. Your daughter confirmed me in my error by saying that you had lately written to an Englishman in Munich, and wished very much to see him.”

“ Hum, ha !—very odd !” murmured the Count, fixing his eyes sharply on Hamilton. “ May I ask your name ?”

“ Hamilton,” replied the Englishman, with an ill-concealed attempt to repress an inclination to laugh.

“ I have not the honour of knowing any one of that name,” said the Count, endeavouring, as well as his blankets would permit him, to look dignified. “ I am surprised, sir, you did not perceive the mistake sooner !”

“ So am I,” replied Hamilton, his rising colour betraying the embarrassment he endeavoured to conceal ;—“ but every moment some remark of yours made me doubt again ; besides,” he added, moving towards the door, “ I must confess, I wished to hear something of this water cure, which is quite new to me : I never heard of it

until yesterday. However, I am extremely sorry for having thus forced myself upon your acquaintance, and can only regret that my correspondent has not written his name in full: from these initials, it seems, I have but a small chance of discovering the writer!"

"I don't know that," cried Count Zedwitz, suddenly changing his manner: "it is by no means improbable that the letter is from Baron Z.; his wife is an English woman,—I should recommend your seeing them before you give up your search. And—and—" he added, hesitatingly, "as you seem interested on the subject of Hydropathy, I shall have great pleasure in lending you some books, and giving you every information in my power about Preissnitz and Graefenberg. In the meantime look over this little work—it is not necessary to be a physician to understand it. You will find here a description of Graefenberg, the establishment of Preissnitz, who discovered this most rational mode of curing all diseases; and I doubt not you will soon be convinced of the uselessness of physicians and apothecaries, and place, as I do, all your reliance on cold water;—read what is said about perspirations, cold water drinking, and bathing: read and judge for yourself. I shall see you at dinner time."

Hamilton received the book with expressions of gratitude, which were really sincere. The happy termination of his interview made him feel that he had gained an acquaintance who might, perhaps, turn into a friend if he submitted to the ordeal by water.

CHAPTER III.

A. Z.

As Hamilton was on his way to his room to procure his credentials, viz. A. Z's. letter, he chanced to meet one of the chambermaids, who offered to conduct him to Baron Z——'s apartment. To prevent the necessity of an explanation he sent her before with one of his cards, and she returned almost immediately, saying, that Baron Z—— would be very happy to see him, and begged he would come to him as soon as possible. Hamilton immediately obeyed the summons, and found himself in the presence of the traveller with the long rifle. In the middle of a large room was a round table, completely covered with shooting implements, beside which stood Baron Z——, examining the identical rifle which he had pointed upwards the evening before. He advanced towards Hamilton with great cordiality, extended his hand, and exclaimed in English,—

“ Mr. Hamilton I am very glad to see you; my

wife and I have been anxiously awaiting your arrival; for we are obliged to leave Seon after dinner to-day to go to Berchtesgarden. Now all is quite easy to arrange—you go with us—you admire the beautiful mountains—you see the salt mines, and then we arrange an alp party, or a chamois hunt together. Are you a good shot?"

"No, I regret to say I am not," answered Hamilton, not a little embarrassed, for his deficiency in this respect had furnished his brother John, greatly his inferior in other respects, with unceasing subject for ridicule; and he half expected some scoffing remark in answer.

"You like to fish, or hunt on horseback, better than chamois hunt, perhaps?"

Hamilton acknowledged, much relieved, that he was very fond of a hunt on horseback;—he could ride, he said, much better than he could shoot.

"And I," answered Baron Z——, good-humouredly, laughing, "I can shoot better than I can ride. I thought it would be interesting for you to be acquainted with our sports, and —"

"It would interest me of all things to see anything of the kind, even as a mere spectator," exclaimed Hamilton, eagerly. "I accept your invitation with many thanks."

Baron Z—— now desired his servant to let his

wife know that "Mr. Hamilton, the Englishman she expected, had arrived, — and Joseph," — he called after him, "take one of the carriage-boxes to Mr. Hamilton's room; he goes with us to Berchtesgarden."

They were in the midst of a very animated discussion of what Hamilton knew very little about, viz., the latest improvements in fire-arms, when the real "A. Z." entered the room. How shall we describe her? Most easily, perhaps, by negatives. She was not tall, nor short, nor stout, nor thin, nor handsome, nor ugly, nor — nor — in fact, as well as Hamilton could define his ideas at such a critical moment, he thought the impression made on him was, that a pale, dark-haired person stood before him, whose countenance denoted sufficient intellect to make him conscious that he had better produce his letter and enter into an explanation at once. The absence of all recognition on her part made him at once conscious that he was not the person she had expected, and he stood before her, blushing so intensely that she seemed at length to feel a sort of commiseration for him. She bit her lip to conceal a smile, and, after a moment's pause, held out her hand, saying, "I confess I expected to have seen your father, and am a little disappointed. You were such a mere

child when I saw you last, John, that you have completely outgrown my recollection. You promised, indeed, to be 'more than common tall,' but I was not prepared for such a specimen of —. You seem to be an inveterate blusher, and very shy; perhaps that was the reason your father wished to send you abroad before you joined your regiment? By the by, I must have been misinformed, but I heard you had already joined! Now, pray don't waste another blush on me, but try to feel at home as soon as you can, and prepare to tell me directly everything about everybody!"

Hamilton moved mechanically towards the sofa, completely confused in every sense of the word, but at the same time greatly relieved in his mind. So, after all, the letter had been intended for his father, and she merely mistook him for his brother John — a common mistake, which he could easily explain. What a fool he would have been had he not come in person to inquire about this "A. Z.," who was evidently an old friend of his father. He began to breathe more freely, and overheard a few words which she addressed to her husband in a very low voice, in German: "Did you ever see such a long-legged, bashful animal? He is, however, handsome, and would be decidedly gen-

tlemanlike if he were less diffident. We must take him with us to Berchtesgarden, Herrmann."

"I have already arranged everything," he answered, nodding his head. "He wishes to see a chamois hunt, and he shall, if I can manage it; at all events, he may stretch his long legs on one of our mountains."

"Are you a sportsman?" she asked in English, turning towards Hamilton and seating herself on the sofa.

"Not the least in the world, as far as shooting is concerned," he answered, stooping to arrange her footstool, and feeling once more unembarrassed, "but I should like extremely to see a chamois hunt."

"If you are not what is called a good shot," said A. Z., "I should recommend the ascent of a mountain or alp instead of a chamois hunt, which is very fatiguing, and I should think must be uninteresting to a person who cannot shoot remarkably well."

"Anything that is new or national will be acceptable to me," answered Hamilton. "I am anxious to profit by my residence in Germany, and see and hear as much as possible; most particularly I wish to become acquainted with some German families, in order to see the inte-

rior of their houses and learn their domestic habits."

While he had been speaking, A. Z. had bent over a small work-box, with the contents of which she absently played. She now looked up, and repeated his last words: "Domestic habits! Does that interest you? — But I had almost forgotten: your father wrote to me on that subject, and I had very nearly entered into an engagement for you with a family in Munich."

"How very odd!" exclaimed Hamilton. "My father never mentioned a word of anything of the kind to me; I do not think even my mother was acquainted with this plan."

"You are mistaken. She referred to it in the only letter I have received from her for years. Indeed, I began to think, as my last letter had remained so long unanswered, that I was quite forgotten by you all, and the letter which you received in Munich was sent on chance. I purposely wrote in general terms, and signed with my initials, knowing that either your father or mother would recognise the hand-writing, and you or one of your brothers would have no difficulty in filling the blank and be glad to have our address."

"I assure you, however, I was extremely puzzled

when I received your letter; nor can I conceive why my father made such a secret of an arrangement which naturally interests me so much. He seemed indifferent whether I passed next winter in Munich or Vienna, and left me perfectly free to choose which I preferred."

"Perhaps because he knew that I had left Munich."

"But he never spoke of any German friend or acquaintance in the least resembling you! He never, I am sure, mentioned your name!"

"It seems then I am quite forgotten; but, as I have expatriated myself, I have no right to complain, and it would be unreasonable to expect people to remember me now, or speak of me to their children. Nevertheless, I cannot forget that I have experienced much kindness from your father and mother in former times, and that I have spent months in their house when you were at school. I shall be very glad if I can in any way be of use to you."

"Thank you. I *cannot* imagine what motive my father could have had for secrecy and mystery on this occasion," said Hamilton, musingly. "The idea is excellent, if I could only put it in practice. Perhaps you will be so kind as to give me your advice and assistance?"

"Most willingly; and I shall begin by giving you my advice to wait until you know something about your commission before you negotiate with any family whatever."

"I am not going into the army—my uncle will not allow me to go to India, so my father intends me to try my fortune in the diplomatic line, and my principal object is to perfect myself in speaking German. A respectable family, could one be found willing to receive me, would answer all my purposes and fulfil all my wishes."

"A diplomat! Then you must endeavour to conquer the *mauvaise honte* with which you seem overpowered when speaking to strangers, or it will never do. You are now natural and at your ease, and I tell you honestly, I can scarcely imagine you to be the same person who a quarter of an hour ago stood before me, blushing and squeezing his hat as if in an agony of embarrassment!"

"And I was in an agony of embarrassment," answered Hamilton, laughing. "I perceived when you entered the room that you did not know me. I fancied that, perhaps, you had not written this letter; or, that it was not intended for me or for my father; and as I had already had one scene about it this morning, I had no wish for another, fearing that a *denouement* with you

might not prove so amusing as with old Count Zedwitz."

Hamilton now gave a short account of that little adventure, which amused her so much, that she related it in German to her husband before he left the room. There was something in A. Z.'s manner towards him which peculiarly invited confidence; a sort of mixture of friend and relation. She appeared so interested in all his plans, understood so exactly what he meant, without asking unnecessary questions, that before half an hour had elapsed, he had confided to her his intention of writing a book! She exhibited no sort of astonishment at the monstrous idea; he could not even detect a particle of ridicule in her smile as she approved of his intention; hoped he had taken notes, and asked him what was to be the subject of his work.

"Germany, and the Domestic Manners of the Germans, or something of that sort."

"I hope, however, you speak German well enough to understand and join in general conversation, and to ask questions and obtain information if necessary? It is unpardonable people writing about the inhabitants of a country when they are incapable of conversing with them."

"I understand it perfectly when it is spoken,

and I generally contrive to make myself intelligible."

"A little more than that is necessary; but, perhaps, you are too modest to boast of your proficiency."

"I scarcely deserve to be called modest, although I am subject to occasional fits of diffidence. I believe I speak German with tolerable fluency, and only want opportunities of hearing and seeing. May I ask the name of the family with whom you were in treaty?"

"I heard of two families, either of them would have answered; but—" she hesitated.

"But what?"

"After everything had been arranged, and I was on the point of writing to your father, I found that only one member of the family wished for you, and that was the person who on such an occasion was of the least importance. I mean the gentleman. He wished for your society to have an opportunity of speaking English, but as he spent the greater part of the day in his office, and went out every evening, you would naturally have fallen to the lot of his wife; and although I praised you as much as I could without knowing how you had grown up, she told me plainly that she should consider you a bore, and that

I could not oblige her more than by breaking off our negotiations. Under such circumstances I had no choice."

"And the other?" asked Hamilton.

"The other was a professor at the university. I wrote to your father about him, but never received any answer."

"A professor! that does not promise much, nor would it answer my purpose. I should see little or nothing of domestic life."

"You are mistaken; I was half afraid you might see too much, for he had a wife and five sons."

"Did his wife enter no protest?"

"I did not see her; but as they were not rich, and had already five young persons in their house, I concluded one more or less could make little difference."

"But a—if another family could be found, I must say I should prefer it, and would rather not apply to the professor, excepting as a last resource."

"We have no longer the option, for he has left Munich. I heard, indeed, of another family—but the objections were insurmountable."

"On the part of husband or wife?"

"This time the objections were on my side: there were unmarried daughters in the house."

"Oh, that would be no objection at all—on the contrary—"

"I considered it a very serious objection," said A. Z., quietly.

"I understand what you mean ; but surely you do not think me such a fool as to fall in love with every girl I happen to live in the house with? I assure you I am by no means so inflammable."

"Very possibly ; but as I could not answer for your not being inflammatory, and am aware that German girls do not understand the word 'firtation,' and are much too serious on such occasions, I thought it better to avoid leading you into temptation. Do not, however, be vexed ; I have many friends in Munich, and have no doubt of being able to find some family—"

"Where there are five unlicked cubs in the house," cried Hamilton, petulantly interrupting her.

"Then, John, you will make the half dozen complete," she answered, laughing. "But, now listen to reason. A family who would consent to receive a young man as inmate in their house, and who, without any degree of relationship or connexion with his family, could enter into pecuniary arrangements with him about board and

lodging, and all that sort of thing, must either be in straitened circumstances, or in a much lower rank of life than yours. I acknowledge that such arrangements are common here, and in some cases they are very judicious; but when the proposal, as in this instance, came from a widow with three unmarried daughters, I found it very injudicious, indeed, and refused at once. Without thinking you either a fool, or disposed to fall in love with every girl you happen to reside with, I do think there is some danger of your forming an attachment which might cause you, and perhaps another person, great pain to break off, or which might hereafter prove embarrassing. Living in the house with three girls, who very probably would vie with each other in their endeavours to please you, would be a severe trial for the impenetrability of so very young a man as you are, and I doubt your standing the test."

"But I assure you—"

"No doubt you will assure me that you have a heart of stone, and that at all events nothing could induce you to form a connexion with a person beneath you in rank, unworthy the name of Hamilton, or who would be displeasing to your father; but as you have had the good fortune

to be the first-born, and consequently will inherit—”

“Pardon me for interrupting you, but I really must set you right on that point,—I am only number two.”

“What, are you not John?” she asked, hastily.

“Had my name been John I should not have opened your letter, it was directed to—”

“To Archibald Hamilton—”

“Excuse me, the address was to A. Hamilton, Esq., Goldenen Hirsch, and—”

“True, I ought to have thought of that before,” she said, mustering him from head to foot, while he began to feel some very uncomfortable misgivings. “Is it—no, it is not possible that you are little Archy?”

“I am *not* little Archy,” cried Hamilton, starting from his seat and instinctively looking towards the door.

“Then, pray, may I ask what *is* your name?” she said, leaning her arm on the table and fixing her eyes on his face with a look of cool deliberation, which completely deprived him of all remaining self-possession.

“Alfred,—Alfred Hamilton is my name,” he cried in a voice which he could scarcely recognize

to be his own, and unable any longer to endure so unpleasant a situation, he seized his hat and a pair of gloves, which he afterwards found belonged to her, and rushed like a madman out of the room. He heard, or thought he heard, a stifled laugh—no matter—she might laugh if she pleased, he would laugh too, and he attempted it on reaching his room, but the effort proved totally abortive, and after gasping once or twice for breath he commenced striding up and down the room talking angrily to himself. “This is too much! I certainly did not deserve such annoyance! Could I do more to prevent mistakes than send my card and show the letter? The disappointment, too! I rather took a fancy to this A. Z.; had even persuaded myself that I remembered having seen her when I was a child! Pshaw! after all she must be an artful person: that sort of motherly, good-natured manner, was all affectation to draw me out; and what a precious fool I have made of myself, telling her all my intentions! Of course she and her husband will laugh at me unmercifully, and tell every one in the house! I must leave Seon directly—I—but no, she was not artful! What on earth could be her motive? No, I was altogether to blame myself, or rather that letter—the letter, the odious letter was the

cause of all!" and he tore it angrily to atoms. At all events this should be a lesson to him: he never would place himself in such a position again as long as he lived.

At twelve o'clock the great bell tolled, and Hamilton knew it was time to descend to dinner. He was busily employed writing, when some one knocked loudly at the door. "Come in," he cried, collecting the papers scattered about him, and Baron Z—— entered the room. He burst into a violent fit of laughter on seeing Hamilton's dolorous countenance, shook him heartily by the hand, and assured him he thought him a capital fellow, and had not the smallest doubt that he would make an excellent diplomat.

"But indeed, Baron Z——, I never meant . . . You must not think that I intentionally . . ."

"Don't explain — pray don't explain — I am so obliged to you! My wife thinks herself so clever! She writes what she calls 'general terms:' ha! ha! ha! and when she explains to me what mean 'general terms,' I told her that pass for our Mr. Hamilton so good as another—but she always thinks herself so clever!"

"I am extremely distressed — disappointed, I must say, at the frustration of all my hopes. I

entreat of you to apologize for me—I leave Seon as soon as possible after dinner.” . . .

“Yes; we leave Seon so soon as possible. I send Joseph to pack for you while we go to dinner.”

“Am I to understand that you renew your invitation to me after what has occurred?” asked Hamilton, with a feeling of inexpressible pleasure.

“And why not? My wife write and I invite in general terms; and now, Mr. A. Hamilton, Esquire, let us go to dinner.”

“I should wish before hand to explain—”

“To my wife? Oh, very well; we call for her on the way.”

“Here,” he cried, throwing wide open the door of her apartment, “here I come to present my friend, Mr. A. Hamilton, Esquire; he wish in general terms to explain to you, and to kiss your hand.”

“The latter part of your speech is composed, Herrmann,” she answered, laughing. “Mr. Hamilton does not yet know enough of the ‘Domestic manners of the Germans,’ to be aware that kissing a lady’s hand is a very common action; here is my hand—it is not, however, worth while blushing about it,” she added, drawing

it back again, "and Herrmann shall be your deputy; it would be difficult to bring a perceptible addition of colour to that sunburnt face."

He took both her hands, and as he pressed them to his lips, declared he was very content to have such a clever wife !

CHAPTER IV.

A WALK OF NO COMMON DESCRIPTION.

"Do you smoke, Mr. Hamilton?" asked Baron Z——, as he assisted his wife into the carriage.

"I rather like a cigar sometimes."

"I merely wish to explain to you, that if you wish to smoke now, you had better mount up here," he said, seating himself on the front-seat of the carriage. "My wife is quite German in every respect, but she has not yet learned to like the smell of tobacco."

"Nor ever will," said A. Z., "nor shall I ever learn to like having guns so near me. Why are they not packed, as usual, into the long case?"

"You forget you have changed all arrangements since you find that Mr. Hamilton is called Alfred," said Baron Z——, laughing.

"I only hope they are not loaded," she said, carefully avoiding their contact, even with the

hem of her garment, "for I have no fancy whatever to have my death announced in the newspapers, after the words, 'Dreadful accident!'"

"They are not loaded," said her husband, puffing strongly from his newly lighted cigar, as they drove off.

Hamilton was extremely amused at his comical situation, or rather at the events which had led to it, and after a few ineffectual efforts at suppression, he indulged in a fit of laughter in which A. Z. joined, and it was some time before she could answer Baron Z——'s repeated inquiries as to the cause of their mirth.

"I really don't know, Herrmann, excepting that perhaps Mr. Hamilton is amused at finding himself in our company. By-the-bye, you do not perhaps know that he speaks very good German."

"Like an Englishman, eh?"

"His German will prove a better medium of communication than your English, perhaps—but,"—she added quickly, changing the subject and speaking German,—“tell me, did you observe the new arrivals at the table d'hôte to-day? Who are those two pretty girls?"

"Rosenthal or Rosenberg, I believe is their name."

"A decided acquisition, as far as appearance is concerned. The one who sat by side Major Stultz at dinner is really beautiful. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, and Major Stultz thinks so too, I should think; he made prodigious efforts to be agreeable, but could neither obtain a smile or look during dinner. Had I been in his place I should have tried the other, who is very nearly as pretty, and seems quite disposed to receive any attentions offered to her. I saw her looking towards our end of the table more than once, but could not ascertain whether she looked at me or your friend there."

"My friend seems rather disposed to appropriate the looks, if I may judge from that rising blush."

"By no means," cried Hamilton; "my acquaintance with the young lady is of very recent date."

"I did not know there was any acquaintance whatever," said A. Z.

"It scarcely deserves the name. We travelled part of the way from Munich together; their carriage was desperately crowded, and I proposed taking some of the travellers. Mademoiselle Crescenz, the nursery-maid, and a kicking-boy, called Peppy, were consigned to my care."

"Such civility was very unusual on the part of

an Englishman; at least our countrymen are here generally supposed to be selfish when travelling," observed A. Z.

"Perhaps my motives were not quite free from an alloy of selfishness: I rather dreaded the *ennui* of a long afternoon alone in an uncomfortable carriage; and besides, I was in search of an adventure."

"How did it turn out?"

"Oh, we got on famously until we reached Seon; but from the moment Mademoiselle Crescenz saw her stepmother, her manner totally changed; so I concluded she intended to decline my acquaintance, now that I could be of no further use to her."

"Your conclusion proved how very little you know of German girls in her rank of life."

"Should one interpret these Germans by contraries?"

"*Cela dépend.*"

"Perhaps, then, her sister intends to be very civil to me—our acquaintance begun by her calling me a fool; and I overheard her saying to her sister, that I seemed to have an uncommonly good opinion of myself, and looked like an overgrown school-boy."

"There is no possibility of mistaking such de-

monstrations," said A. Z., smiling, and evidently controlling an inclination to laugh, extremely displeasing to Hamilton.

"You seem," he said, somewhat distrustfully, "you seem amused—perhaps at my expressing your thoughts in the words of another person?"

"What I thought of you on your first appearance—"

"I already know. You thought me a long-legged bashful animal: at least you said so to Baron Z——."

"At that time I fancied I had a sort of right to criticise; and had you really proved to be John or Archy, as I supposed, you might have often been favoured with equally flattering observations; I should have considered you a sort of relation, and you would, undoubtedly, have thought me a great bore. Now the case is different, and I shall treat you with all possible respect; but you must allow me to laugh, and promise not to be offended at every idle word—"

"Offended!—oh no! I should be extremely delighted if you would act towards me as if I were John or Archy."

"You are too young to appreciate such treatment—and—I don't feel disposed unnecessarily to undertake the part of Mentor."

"You fear the task would prove too troublesome?"

"Not exactly that—I rather like giving advice; but—"

"You think I should do you no credit?"

"I really do not know, nor do I mean to try. Your search for adventures may bring you into some embarrassments which may not always turn out so well as on the present occasion."

"My good fortune on the present occasion has been so extraordinary that I shall tempt fate no further: my plan is formed. I shall spend the winter in Munich, studying German and the Germans. In the domestic circle of a private family—"

"Where there are no boys?" asked A. Z.

"As a proof of my deference to your opinion, I shall make no objection even to five boys; and also promise to avoid a widow with unmarried daughters."

"I have some hope of you now!"

"Will you then be my Mentor during my sojourn in Germany?"

"No."

"But you said you liked giving advice?"

"And so I do; it is, you know, the only thing that everybody is disposed to give, and nobody

likes to take. Ask my advice and I shall give it ; although I know beforehand you will not make use of it."

"Just as much as either John or Archy."

"No such thing ! My advice to them would have been enforced by a little delegated parental authority, not to mention the probability of their having, from hearsay, very exalted ideas of my wisdom."

"I doubt if their ideas on that subject could possibly be more exalted than mine."

"Very appropriately answered—you really are an extremely promising young man !"

Hamilton bit his lip and blushed ; there was something in her manner so mocking, so unequivocally ironical, that he felt mortified ; his silent irritation betraying itself in spite of all his endeavours at concealment.

"You are offended," she observed quietly, after a pause, "and offended without any cause. I have, all my life, had a particular antipathy to very young men,—it is quite impossible to talk to them without making remarks which they consider derogatory to their dignity. I did not mean to annoy you, and recall my words ; instead of a *promising*, I now think you an *irritable*, young man. Does that please you better ?"

"Infinitely better," he answered, laughing;—"if not the words, certainly the manner is preferable. I can bear anything but being turned into ridicule."

"What you now call ridicule will a few years hence take the name of badinage; but let us talk of something else, or still better—suppose we read. Here is the last '*Allgemeine Zeitung*,' or '*Blackwood's Magazine*.'"

"Do you take '*Blackwood*?' " inquired Hamilton.

"I get it and any books I wish for from the royal library. No one can be more magnificently liberal than the King of Bavaria, in this respect. When you go to Munich your banker can sign papers making himself answerable for any books which may be lost or injured while in your possession; and this is the only formality necessary to ensure you the unlimited use of a library containing upwards of eight hundred thousand volumes."

"But you do not mean to say that I, a foreigner, may take the books home with me?"

"Your ideas are too English to comprehend such liberality, and so were mine when I first came to Munich; but the fact is, you may take the books to your own apartment and read them

at your leisure. Of course, you must be careful not to injure them in any way."

"But if many people enjoy this privilege the books must be spoiled in time."

"You think, perhaps, it would be wiser if the eight hundred thousand volumes were put into glass book-cases and merely exhibited to strangers, instead of being placed at their disposition? As far as I can judge, however, from personal observation, the books are not either spoiled or even soiled; at least, none I have ever required; and you see," she said, removing a paper cover from one of them, "they are very nicely bound."

"Do you read a great deal?" he asked.

"I once thought so, but on referring to the list of books actually read at the end of the year, it was so insignificant that I now make no pretension to being what is called a reader—a few memoirs, travels, an occasional novel, and the newspapers, fill up my time completely. But, now you really must take a book, or admire the country in silence, for I cannot allow my 'Allgemeine Zeitung' to remain longer unread. I have only time for one each day, and I get into a fit of despair when they accumulate."

"I think if you won't talk to me I should like to smoke a cigar."

"A most excellent idea ! Take the coachman's place beside Herrmann, who, I am sure, will willingly drive in order to have the pleasure of your company. You can talk over your intended expedition, and boast of the quantity of grouse you would have shot had you been at home this August."

The day had already closed as they drew near the little village of Siegsdorf; lights glanced gaily from the windows of the houses, and from the small inn the sound of singing and laughter was wafted far and wide.

"I don't think we could do better than stop here for the night," observed Baron Z——, turning abruptly to his wife.

"I expected some such proposition as soon as I heard the sound of the zither," she answered.

"May I?" he asked, playing with the whip, while the horses apparently unwilling to pass by a stable, the comforts of which they had probably experienced on a former occasion, turned of their own accord into the roughly-paved yard, and stopped at the door of the inn.

The landlady made her way with some difficulty through the passage, which was crowded with peasants, to the door, where she stood to receive the travellers, her rotundity of figure placed in

strong relief by the light behind her. Baron Z—— merrily returned the innumerable salutations made him, as followed by his wife and Hamilton, he led the way to a room reserved for guests of the higher classes. One table was still unoccupied, and the landlady having with her apron swept away the crumbs of bread, and removed some empty glasses which were upon it, placed chairs, asked what they chose for supper—gave the necessary directions to a girl who was standing near her, and then with a sort of contented sign, seated herself on a bench at the other end of the table, evidently waiting to be spoken to. Baron Z—— looked round him as if in search of some one, and then said :

“Well, how goes the world with you? are all the children well?”

“All in good health, thank you.”

“Where is my old friend, Hauser? I miss him when he is not seated at the head of that table.”

“He is out shooting to-day.”

“Is there, then, a chance of my getting a shot if I remain here to-morrow?”

“Indeed I cannot promise much. They say the game is getting very scarce. I am sometimes a whole week without venison. You expected

better news, I know, for I saw your rifle in the carriage."

"Not here," said Baron Z——; "but I am on my way to Reichenhall and Berchtesgarden, and at once place or the other I hope to have a chamois hunt. A friend of mine wishes to see the sport."

"Ah, so!" cried the landlady, looking intelligently towards Hamilton. "I have part of a chamois in the house; perhaps the gentleman would like a ragout of it?"

"Should you like some chamois for supper?" asked A. Z., turning to Hamilton.

"Oh, of all things," he answered, eagerly.

"It is rather a dry kind of meat," she continued; "I have eaten it but twice myself; once from curiosity, the second time from—necessity. You remember, Herrmann?"

"Yes; when we came out of Tyrol and went to the Klamm. I think we ought to show, at least, one of the Klamms to Mr. Hamilton. An expedition of that kind will be something new to him, and a day more or less is of no consequence to us."

"I am sure you are very kind," said Hamilton, delighted at the word "expedition," but not in the least knowing what he was to see.

"We might have the carriage to meet us at Unken, and our landlady will get us a key of the woodman's house."

The landlady nodded assent.

"And cold chickens and tongues, and coffee, and all those sort of things. I shall take guides from Ruhpolding."

"Herr Baron," cried a tall peasant who had been leaning against the half-open door and listening attentively to every word that had been said,—“Herr Baron you promised to employ me the next time you went there; I could go to Fraunstein for the key to-night, and meet you in Ruhpolding to-morrow.”

"Off with you, then," cried Baron Z——, "and be sure to be there at five o'clock to-morrow."

"Or at half-past six," said A. Z.; "and don't forget to take the largest bags you can find."

The man nodded his head, scraped one of his heavy shoes upon the floor and disappeared.

Baron Z——, who was one of the most restless beings Hamilton had ever seen, now walked up and down the room, looked out of the windows as well as the thick leaves of the numerous cactus plants would permit, played with all the ugly strange dogs in the room, and after having seated himself for a minute or two on every unoccu-

pied chair he could find, he finally joined the guests at the other table, and in a few minutes was discussing politics with an elderly man who had been poring over the pages of the newspapers; then he listened and related sporting anecdotes to another, who from his dress he knew must be a *Jäger*; with a wood-ranger he talked of timber, the drifts of wood in the neighbourhood, and during the first pause in the conversation, he took up a guitar which was lying on the table and commenced singing Tyrolean songs with such spirit and humour, that his audience unanimously joined in chorus, each taking the part suiting his voice with a precision so surprising to Hamilton, that he asked A. Z. if they had often sung together before.

"Never that I am aware of," she answered, examining more attentively the singers; "I do not think Herrmann is acquainted with even one of them."

The music within seemed to inspire some musicians without, for no sooner had it ceased than the gay notes of a zither were heard; an instrument which Hamilton had never seen, and which A. Z. told him was well worth the trouble of an examination. He was about to leave the room for the purpose, when he met the landlady carry-

ing in the soup for supper ; he stopped embarrassed, but Baron Z——, without further ceremony, called in the peasant who was the best performer, and gave him a place beside him at the table. The man tuned his zither, and begun to play what he called "*Laendlers*," perhaps from the word land or country. Simple waltzes, to which the peasants dance, and which A. Z. assured Hamilton, when accompanied by a guitar, and the time beaten by the dancing of feet and snapping of fingers, at a target-shooting match, or a wedding, was the very gayest music she had ever heard.

They were all in high spirits the next morning when they met soon after sunrise, for the weather promised to be extremely fine, indeed sultry, if an unclouded sky at so early an hour might be depended upon. Hamilton was, therefore, not a little surprised at the number of cloaks and shawls with which the carriage was lumbered, and at Baron Z——'s dress. He had on the same grey shooting jacket and green felt hat in which he had first seen him — but he had also black knee-breeches and worsted stockings drawn half-way up his thighs, but which were so elastic that they could be pushed below the knees, where clinging to the legs they formed folds at a distance resem-

bling top-boots. A large pouch hung at his side, and in his hand he carried a long pole with an iron point. Hamilton was also given one as he got into the carriage, and they drove off amidst the heartiest wishes for good weather and their enjoyment of it.

"Mr. Hamilton would have got on better without straps and with thicker boots," observed Baron Z—.

"It is of no consequence, for to-day we have scarcely any ascent, if I remember right," answered his wife.

"I ought to have equipped him," cried Baron Z—, laughing. "How do you think he would look?"

"As he is considerably taller than you are—there would be at least half a yard of leg uncovered."

"The dress is certainly very becoming," observed Hamilton, "but I cannot imagine it particularly comfortable."

"If you had to climb you would find it as comfortable as becoming," answered Baron Z—, "and that it is judicious admits of no doubt; all mountaineers have something similar, and you may be sure the dress was originally adopted for its convenience. It is unquestionably advantageous,

having the knees uncovered in ascending and descending mountains."

"And the monstrous shoes — " begun Hamilton—

"Give a steadier footing, and preserve the feet from the pointed stones or rocks."

"I remember," said A. Z., "the first time I ascended an alp, I wore thin shoes and open-work silk stockings; I came home nearly barefoot, of course, and with quite a new idea of an alp!"

"Oh, pray do give me some idea of one," cried Hamilton; "I—I must confess I have none whatever, for when people talk of alps, I cannot help thinking of *the Alps*."

"I am not surprised at your question, for I doubt if the word be in the dictionary with the meaning attached to it here. People call the pasture lands on the hills or lower parts of the mountains, 'alps.' Almost every farmer of any importance has one to which he sends the greater part of his cattle during the summer months, and there butter and cheese are made for the winter. Where the alps are extensive they are held by several persons, and instead of one little wooden residence, there are sometimes twenty or thirty."

"A sort of inhabited common, perhaps?"

"By no means. They are inherited or bought,

or given in leases, and are sometimes very valuable."

"The view from them is, of course, very extensive," observed Hamilton.

"Generally, or I should not have been on so many."

"And I," said Baron Z—, "always endeavour to pass the night on one when I am on a hunting expedition, for, besides the chance of a few hours' sleep in a hay-loft, one can warm oneself at a good fire, and breakfast before day-break. You shall see an alp, and a chamois hunt also, if I can manage it, before you return to Seon."

"I have no doubt of being able to mount any alp you please," said Hamilton, "but for a person who is not a good shot to undertake anything so dangerous as a chamois hunt —"

"Danger! There is no danger whatever."

"No danger! Why I have read frightful accounts of chamois hunts!"

"Read! Oh, so have I—and I don't deny that an accident may occur occasionally. In Switzerland, for instance, where the chase is free, the chamois have become so scarce and shy, that they have taken refuge in the highest parts of the mountains. There, and perhaps in those parts of Tyrol where they are only nominally protected,

they are difficult to be got at—but in the neighbourhood of Berchtesgarden, Ischl, and Steyermark, a chamois is not much more difficult to shoot than a stag or a roebuck."

"But," said A. Z., "you must confess that people always think more and talk more of a chamois hunt than of any other. You would rather, I am sure, shoot a chamois than a deer!"

"That is true, but there is no use in making more of it than is necessary. Mr. Hamilton, with his present ideas, will be greatly disappointed, I fear."

"No, for I was just going to tell him that I have been on mountains where the chamois have been seen springing from rock to rock in places to which I could easily have mounted if I had put on a pair of *steigeisen*."

"What is that? What are they?"

"I scarcely know how to describe them; they look like pattens at a distance, and are buckled over the shoes in the same manner, but they are provided with four strong iron spikes, to enable you to plant your feet steadily in the ground or in the fissures of the rocks."

"That's it!" cried Hamilton. "*They* were also in the description which I read."

"Do not have too exalted an idea of the danger

on that account," answered A. Z., laughing; "for I have heard that many people who inhabit the mountainous parts of this country use them when they walk on the snow in winter."

"So, after all," said Hamilton, "a chamois hunt is quite a common sort of thing!"

"You are falling into the contrary extreme now," said Baron Z——; "for though it is no uncommon thing, strong sinews, good lungs, a quick eye, and a steady hand are always required in order to be successful."

They arrived at Ruhpolding, and found their guides waiting for them — tall, strong-looking men, with sunburnt faces and bushy moustachios. Their dress was of coarser materials, but in other respects quite resembling Baron Z——'s, excepting that their grey stockings, with a fanciful pattern in green, were short, and left their knees perfectly bare. On their shoulders were slung canvas bags, into which they immediately packed the cloaks, shawls, and provisions of every description.

A couple of miles beyond Ruhpolding the carriage was abandoned, and the party commenced their expedition on a footway through the Fischbach Valley. The vegetation around them was of the richest colouring, the mossy grass under the

trees of the deepest green, and wild berberry-trees, with their delicate leaves and pendant crimson berries, grew luxuriantly in every direction. A variety of beautifully delicate wild flowers pleased Hamilton's eye, but he looked on with some impatience, while A. Z. and her husband leisurely gathered and examined some, took others up by the roots, and placed all in a tin box, evidently brought for the purpose. Long and serious too were the discussions about them, which, as Hamilton did not understand, he was glad when, in contrast to this scene of fertility, their way brought them to the immediate base of the mountains, where it ran parallel with the dry bed of a torrent, almost deserving the name of river, when in spring it rushes from its snowy source, sweeping away heaps of stones and trunks of torn-up trees, which, thrown high on either side, leave the valley between a scene of stony desolation. They continued for a considerable time between the almost perpendicular sides of the mountains, sometimes climbing over colossal masses of stone, at others enjoying the shade of the thick pine-trees or overhanging rocks, when on passing an abrupt turn, a foaming waterfall seemed suddenly to prevent all further progress, for, after passing over the very path they were pursuing, it bounded

from the rocks, which sometimes arrested, but could not impede, its progress, until having half exhausted itself in spray, it reached a solid bed of stone, and finally disappeared among the dark green fir-trees of the narrow valley below.

While Hamilton looked in silent admiration down the precipice, A. Z., her husband, and the two guides disappeared in the cavity of the rock behind the waterfall, and seemed greatly to enjoy his surprise when he discovered them sitting under the trees at the other side. While one of the guides unpacked his canvas bag, and laid the contents on the nearest rock, Hamilton joined them, and they remained beside the waterfall more than an hour, enjoying their frugal repast while resting in the shade, and tranquillized almost to laziness by the sound of the rushing waters. Baron Z—— was, of course, the first to move.

“Ah, there is a *châlet*!” exclaimed Hamilton, pointing towards some small wooden buildings on a green hill before them; below which a second waterfall, forming natural cisterns in the rocks, fell in cascades from one to the other. “A *châlet* at last!”

“We call them *senner* huts here,” said A. Z. “When men have the charge of the cattle they are called *senners*; when women, *sennerins*. Let

us go to where that girl is standing at the door of her hut, she seems an acquaintance of our guide's. These *sennerins*," she continued, looking attentively at the one who was now about to supply them with cheese and butter,—“these *sennerins* are the theme of almost all the national poetry and songs here in the mountains.”

“They would not inspire me,” said Hamilton, laughing. “I see nothing very poetical about them, if this one may be taken as a specimen.”

“You do not understand their manners or mode of life,” said Baron Z——. “Their isolated situation and primitive occupations are poetical—these mountains and endless forests are poetical—there is poetry in the sound of the bell, which answers to every movement of the grazing cow—in the tinkling of the little bells which, like castanets, denote the quicker motions of the goats!”

“True,” said A. Z., “and you would find that round faced, thick-legged girl, picturesque if not poetical, could we remain long enough for you to hear her singing to assemble her herd, and see her surrounded by her cows and goats this evening.”

“Shall we not pass the night in one of these sort of huts?” asked Hamilton.

“Not in a *senner* hut,” replied Baron Z——. “It is the woodmen and foresters’ *châlet* to which

we are going; the ground is Austrian, but the woods are Bavarian; and it is through the klamm that the wood is drifted for the salt-works at Reichenhall."

"Through the klamm," repeated Hamilton, slowly and musingly.

"You look as if you did not know what the word klamm meant," observed A. Z.

"I must confess I do not, although I looked for it yesterday evening in my pocket dictionary. The explanation was a spasm in the throat; or, close, solid, narrow—"

"Exactly," said A. Z. "The klamm, which we are now going to see, is a long narrow passage, made by a stream of water through a mountain of solid rock; but now let us move on or we shall have to inspect it by torch light."

They all hurried forward towards the ascent before them, and would probably have felt considerably fatigued had not the continual change in the scenery created unceasing interest. Far as the eye reached, all was green; and beyond, the deep blue sky, unbroken by a single cloud, a new and gigantic world of mountains rewarded them for the toil of the ascent. Here and there a peasant's house, with its overhanging wooden roof, gave life to a picture that with all its sunshine

would otherwise have been desolate in its loneliness, for no human being was visible. It seemed extraordinary that the ground was so highly cultivated, for road there was none; nor did there seem to be any communication with the world but by a narrow, and in some places rather dangerous, foot-way. Cattle were to be seen further up the mountains, on those green spots of turf described by A. Z., and which are to be found sometimes even among the bare crags. These pastures can only be used for a short time in summer; and as the weather grows colder in autumn, the cattle are driven down lower, until finally they are brought home for the winter, covered with garlands of wild flowers! While Baron Z—— was enthusiastically describing “A return from the Alp,” they had begun to descend into the valley, and already heard the sound of rushing water. Magnificent masses of rock prepared them for the cavern, into which they entered by a natural arch, over which, carved in the stone, are the words:

“Gutta cavat lapidem, non vi sed saepe cadendo,
1833.”

“So the cave is altogether formed by the action of the water,” observed Hamilton, looking upwards.

“Altogether, as you will soon perceive,” replied

Baron Z——. “Some years ago this was a wild place, and frightful accidents often occurred, until our king had a way made through it for the convenience and safety of the persons employed in the drifting of the wood.”

The narrow bridge-like way of which he spoke was composed of strong beams and planks; and in the twilight which always reigns in the vaulted tunnel, it appears to hang suspended in the air, being supported by iron cramps driven into the solid rock underneath. The water rages, and above the daylight enters sparingly by a few small isolated openings.

“One could fancy this the abode of the ‘Wild Huntsman,’” said A. Z.

“I know nothing of the wild huntsman,” said Hamilton, “excepting from the scenery in ‘Der Freyschutz.’ Every thing I have seen to-day, but most of all this wild cavern reminds me of it. I should rather like to be here on a stormy night, to hear the wind whistling through these arches. Although not very imaginative, I do think I could almost bring the wild huntsman to my view, just here where the sky begins to be visible.”

“Instead of the wild huntsman substitute the forester when he opens the sluices to let the wood drift through!” said Baron Z——. “Fancy

the rushing and roaring of the pent-up torrent, the dashing of the trunks of trees against these rocks, the terrific noise increased by the echo—”

“ Oh ! how I should like to see it ! ” exclaimed Hamilton, eagerly.

“ I prefer a quiet sunset like the present,” said A. Z., beginning to ascend the steps which led out of the cavern. “ I can imagine what you have described, and acknowledge that wild weather heightens the effect of scenery such as this ; but still just in such places I particularly enjoy the repose of nature ; there is no lameness in it, for the possible change which may take place is ever unconsciously before the mind’s eye.”

“ That may be true,” said Hamilton, thoughtfully. “ I have seen but little wild scenery—never any thing resembling this, excepting, as I said before, at the theatre, where I looked upon every thing as very fine, but very impossible.”

“ Few people in England are aware how very true to nature the ‘ Freyschutz ’ is ; put the wild huntsman and the charmed bullets aside, and every target-shooting match in the mountains will bring the scenery and actors before you. Weber was in the habit of frequenting such places, and listening for hours to the untutored singers and zither players.”

“Who have we here?” cried Baron Z——, as they came within view of the woodmen’s house, and he perceived several persons moving backwards and forwards.

“Another party!” exclaimed A. Z. “I only hope they are not too numerous, and that we may be able to join them. I have no fancy for going on to an alp this evening.”

“But if they are all strangers—,” begun Hamilton.

“If they are, we shall make their acquaintance. I think I see a couple of ladies, a most fortunate circumstance for me, as they will be sure to offer to make our coffee and arrange everything. I am not at all useful on parties of this kind, but very thankful to any one who takes care of me.”

They were strangers, and considered themselves such in a double sense — for they were Austrians! While A. Z. was explaining the extraordinary fact of Bavarians considering themselves foreigners in Austria, and *vice-versâ*, Baron Z. had entered into conversation with them, and a few minutes sufficed for him to guess the name of one who said he was there on business; and from him he heard all he required about the others. As to A. Z., she lost no time in seeking

two ladies who were standing at the door of the *châlet*, and having confessed her want of experience in all culinary art, they, without hesitation, made the offer she desired, and were given the bags, which the guides were just taking from their shoulders.

The supper composed of the most heterogeneous materials was eaten under the trees near the house, and it was not until late that they took refuge from the night air in the kitchen of the *châlet*, where a bright fire burned on the high open hearth which, like a long table, occupied the middle of the room, with wooden benches round it. A zither was found in the house, and a young student, with long fair hair flowing over his black velvet coat, who had brought a guitar, slung troubadour-fashion, over his shoulders, sung directly he was requested. A quartette was also soon arranged, and Hamilton seated in a corner, out of the glare of the fire, contemplated the party for a long time in silence.

At daybreak the next morning, long before the sun's rays could reach them, they were again in the klamm, and passing through it, found another and much easier way than that of the previous day, which brought them to Unken. There they

parted from their acquaintance of the evening before, who surrounded their carriage, bowing and shaking hands with a mixture of formality and friendliness which afforded A. Z. and Hamilton subject of conversation for some time, the former observing, that had two English parties met in the same way they would never have joined so cordially, and instead of conducing to each other's amusement, would most probably have sat apart reciprocally watching to detect whatever was disagreeable or vulgar. "I, for my part," she continued, "was exceedingly well satisfied with my companions, who were very communicative, and related a great many interesting particulars of their mode of life in Tyrol. I have promised to visit them should I ever be in their neighbourhood; their father is Forester, and the eldest is engaged to be married to that silent shy man in the green shooting-jacket. However, he was not too shy to wait for her at the foot of the ladder, when he supposed we were all asleep."

"So they really did take a walk by moonlight!"

"The moonlight did not last long; and I do not believe they went further than the bench outside the door, where they found more company than they expected. Romantic feelings and sentimental contemplations, are not confined to Ger-

man women ; there are few men here who would not sacrifice a few hours' rest on an occasion like yesterday to sit—and smoke in the moonbeams.”

“How ingeniously you always contrive to alloy your praise of us,” said her husband, laughing.

“And yet I am strict to truth ; for the fumes of cigars ascended with the murmuring of voices, last night to my window, and obliged me to close it.”

“Well, we shall have nothing of the kind to night, as we are likely to be alone on the alp.”

“I have been thinking it would be as well if we were to go to Berchtesgarden, and sleep comfortably in beds ; I do not feel quite equal to another night passed on the hay.”

CHAPTER V.

AN ALP.

To Berchtesgarden they went. We shall not follow Hamilton either when he inspected the salt-works, or visited the beautiful lakes in its immediate neighbourhood; nor would we accompany him to the alp, which he afterwards ascended, were it not to give our readers a slight idea of those excursions so common in the mountainous parts of Bavaria, and of the little importance attached to a chamois hunt. They were unceremoniously joined in their expedition by a number of hunters, foresters, and some officers who were on leave of absence. A. Z. went with them very willingly, as she heard that an acquaintance of hers was spending a few weeks on the alp for her health, enjoying what is called "*Sommer frisch*;" and, in fact, on reaching the *châlet*, which was situated in the midst of the mountains, they found a very nice-looking, sun-burnt person, sitting with her maid before the door. She was surprised to see

the Z's, but not in the least to see the others, as she said scarcely a week passed that some one did not come to hunt; and on hearing that Hamilton spoke German, she pointed upwards towards the rocks before the house, and said that in the evening he would see the chamois leaping about there.

"She is destroying all the mystery of a chamois hunt," said Hamilton, turning to A. Z. "I could run up that mountain, I think."

"I would not advise you to try it, nor, indeed, can I consent to your making any excursion on the mountains alone as long as you are travelling with us. Violent deaths are not at all uncommon here; it is not long since a girl gathering herbs, fell over a precipice and was dashed to pieces; and a man was found nearly starved to death in a place to which he had climbed, but from which he found it impossible to extricate himself. That old man," she added, lowering her voice, "that old *Jäger*, who is now speaking to Herrmann, had some dispute with his only son when they were on a chamois hunt together; people say, that a push from him in the heat of argument, precipitated the young man thousands of feet below; his body was found in a dreadfully mutilated state, but there was no evidence against

the old man, for they had been alone, and as such accidents are but too common, the exact state of the case has never been ascertained, and his confessor alone knows what happened."

"Well, Hamilton, are you disposed to try a shot this evening?" asked Baron Z., "three or four chamois have been seen in the neighbourhood."

"I shall go with you as a looker-on; but as I am a very bad shot, I think one of these poles will be of more use to me than a rifle."

"We shall send some men up to beat them down to us," said Baron Z. "There is no use in climbing more than is necessary."

"Can you not use dogs?" asked Hamilton.

"They could never be properly trained, for although the chamois do not in the least mind the clattering of stones or gravel, any unusual sound immediately attracts their attention. A solitary hunter has only to avoid this, and to take care that the wind blows in his face, or, at least, not from him in the direction where he expects to find them. Their scent is something almost incredible, and only equalled by their shyness."

"It is, after all, a very difficult shot," said Hamilton.

"Yes, in Tyrol and Switzerland, where they

have been hunted until they have taken refuge in the most inaccessible places — though even there I doubt the truth of most of the wonderful stories related of them, especially of their so maliciously forcing the hunters down the precipices. It has been proved that the chamois have no remarkable preference for very high or cold mountains; they only choose them in order to have a good retreat among the rocks when pursued."

"That I observed too, last year," said an officer who was of the party, "at Prince Lamberg's, where there is the best chamois hunting in Germany, perhaps. They were there so well preserved that they were not more shy or difficult to shoot than other game; and instead of their only being to be found in the evening, or at dawn, they rambled about all day, and when the weather was mild did not even seek the shade."

"I have heard of Prince Lamberg's mountains," said Baron Z., "he has fifteen or sixteen hundred chamois on them, I hear; but after all when one can have them without much trouble one does not value them so highly; for instance, I shot a chamois some years ago, in Bayrishzell, but was out nearly twenty-four hours before I got a shot—here is his beard, which I have pre-

served and worn ever since," he added, taking off his hat and showing a little fan-like ornament which Hamilton had before observed without knowing its value.

"Then they have beards like goats!" said Hamilton.

"No," replied Baron Z. "This is called a beard, but it is the hair which grows along the back."

"I see something very like a chamois up there," said the officer, who held a small telescope to his eye.

Every one wished to look — some could not find the place—others imagined they saw *something*—one thought it was the stump of a tree—but some practised eyes having pronounced it to be the desired animals feeding, the party broke up and the chase begun.

Hamilton climbed with an ease and lightness which surprised his companions, but he so often stopped to admire a handsome beech-tree, or to "seek for fresh evening air in the opening glades," that they by degrees went on, and he found himself at last alone on a spot where some convulsion of Nature had split the mountain partly asunder. He saw far, far beneath him the road into Tyrol; the heavy-laden waggons, which a few days be-

fore he had thought packed dangerously high, now wound, pigmy-like, along, the motion of the endless team of horses scarcely perceptible. Hill rose beyond hill, until the prospect was bounded by the grotesque masses of rocks which, rising from the wooded mountains, increase their gigantic appearance by their partial concealment behind those light wreaths of clouds which seldom entirely desert their summits. For the inhabitants of the valley, the sun had long disappeared, but around Hamilton everything was still in the glow of sunset; he seated himself on the mossy turf and deliberately resigned himself to contemplation. No place could have been better chosen, and he was therefore surprised and disappointed to find that the sublime thoughts which he had expected did not present themselves to his mind. He admired the surpassing luxuriance of the vegetation in the valleys, the different-coloured foliage of the trees; the wild irregular course of the foaming river;—he tried to think of the greatness of the Creator in His works, the insignificance of man and his endeavours—in vain. An agreeable feeling of general satisfaction stole over him, while fancy conveyed him home to his family, to his youthful friends. A handsome English residence rose before him, with well-kept lawns,

gravelled walks and shrubberies ; groups of well-dressed people were visible among the trees, and on the steps leading to the hall-door a large party was assembled. Carriages and riding-horses were there ; laughing girls, in their long habits, young men carelessly loitering near them. They were to visit a well-*preserved* ruin in the neighbourhood — so often seen, it is true, that everything was thought of more than the nominal object. Camp-stools, servants in livery ; champagne and pine-apples began to chase each other in pleasing confusion before Hamilton's mind's eye—when the distant report of a gun destroyed the “baseless fabric” of his waking “vision,” and he started up, remembering with some amazement that he was engaged in a chamois hunt ! “It is of little consequence,” he thought, “for had I fired ten times, I should never have hit one.”

He plunged into the wood, and commenced a regular and steady ascent, which he continued even after the fir-tree had begun to dwindle into a dwarfy shrub, and the beautiful wild rhododendron had disappeared altogether. His path became steeper and more rocky, and at length he was reduced to the necessity of creeping round the intervening obstacles, and of supporting himself by the few plants which vegetated among the

fissures of the rocks. Not a sound broke the silence around him, the moon slowly rose above the darkening horizon, which was slightly streaked with a faint crimson tinge, leaving on the dim grey of the mountain tops the still perceptible reflection of the fading sunlight. The valleys were in the deepest shade, and from the dispersed peasant houses lights began to twinkle. Hamilton looked carefully round him to ascertain, if possible, his position, before he descended into the thick wood which lay beneath him. The falling of some loose stones and a fragment of rock in his vicinity made him start, but immediately supposing it to be some of his former companions, he called out, that if any one were there, he wished they would wait for him; a clattering of stones and scampering ensued, accompanied by a sharp sound, perfectly incomprehensible to him, until on a projecting rock far above him, he perceived three chamois, standing in strong relief between him and the cloudless sky, and gazing irresolutely around them. They allowed him to examine them for some time, as well as the distance and moonlight would admit, but as he endeavoured to approach nearer they suddenly sprang up the rocks, and sending a shower of stones and sand over him, disappeared in a few seconds. By this

time he had lost all idea of where he might be, and although extremely unwilling to increase his distance from the *châlet*, he saw the absolute necessity of still climbing in order to see into the Alpine Valley, in which it was situated. Perfectly unacquainted with the irregularities of the mountain, he kept as much as possible in the light, following occasionally what he supposed to be paths, but which were in fact the stony beds of the mountain rivulets, formed by the thawing snow in spring. He wandered on in this manner, sometimes ascending, sometimes descending, for more than two hours, looking round in every direction, but not a trace could he find of the *châlet*, nor, indeed, at last, of any habitation whatever. On reaching a part of the ridge of the mountain he was somewhat startled to find that the other side descended in a perpendicular precipice of rock, apparently so smooth and destitute of verdure that it might be supposed a wall. He stopped,—and all A. Z. had said to him recurred at once to his memory. The moon was still too young to remain visible to him much longer, and it would be totally dark by the time he reached the wood; he saw no alternative but to stay where he was until morning, and had actually chosen a place of repose, when the distant sound of guns,

fired at regular intervals, made him imagine that he, and no longer the chamois, was the object of pursuit. A faint echo of human voices too reached his ear, and he shouted loudly in answer. A frightfully distinct echo from the mountain opposite made him desist; he feared that his deliverers might be misled, and he now hurried along in the direction from whence the welcome sounds had first reached him. Keeping on the top of the mountain, and avoiding any place where the shadows of the rocks prevented him from seeing his way distinctly, he walked and ran, and sprung and vaulted with his long pole until, the moon disappearing behind a mountain, created a sort of half-night, which again forced him to halt. Suspecting that the echo had misled him, and fearing that he was farther than ever from his companions, he perceived without regret the gradual cessation of the treacherous sounds, and at length, with a sort of desperate English calmness, he seated himself on the ground, and after a few not very successful efforts to place himself comfortably against a sandy bank, he took a cigar, lighted it, and crossing his arms, resigned himself to his fate. The night proved darker than he had expected, and he gazed on the starry firmament until his thoughts became confused, and his

eyes closed in heavy slumber, which remained unbroken until the cold breeze of breaking day caused a chill to pass through his stiffening limbs. He rose, and looked about him with some astonishment for some minutes, and then, with long strides, began a rapid descent.

Great was afterwards his annoyance to find that instead of arriving, as he had expected, at the *châlet*, he had quite reached the base of the mountain, and that merely a narrow ravine separated him from another of precisely the same description. He stood for a moment irresolute, and felt — very hungry. The sun had begun to colour vividly the eastern sky, and, after a little consideration, he found that returning to the alp would oblige him to mount again, and he was still very uncertain in what direction it lay; whereas, if he took another course, he would probably in an hour or two find some opening into one of the surrounding roads, where he could enter the first peasant's house he should see and procure something to eat. In this conjecture he was perfectly right. Sooner than he had dared to hope, a cheerful house, prettily situated on a green hill, and surrounded by fruit-trees, rejoiced his eyes. Some wild sunburnt little boys and girls announced his approach, and when he came to the

door he found a large family assembled. His wants were soon made known ; and a table, placed before the wooden bench which ran along the front of the house was soon covered with a rustic, but not frugal, breakfast. An enormous loaf of dark-brown bread, a bason of milk, covered with thick yellow cream, some pounds of butter, honey, and cheese, fried eggs, and a sort of mashed-up *omelette*, called *schmarn*. While Hamilton was eating, the peasant's wife stood near, her youngest child on her arm and a couple of others leaning against her. She assured him, if he had not been in such a hurry she could have made some coffee for him ; she always bought coffee at the fair, and drank it every Sunday ! She was so sorry her husband was not at home, but she expected him every moment ; he had gone up to the alp at daybreak with fresh rolls for the breakfast of the gentlemen who had been out shooting.

As she spoke, a loud gay voice was heard in the distance jodling, and the children all rushed down the hill and disappeared in the wood.

"That is probably your husband," said Hamilton ; "I shall be glad to hear what sport they have had on the alp."

"Oh ! you were there, too — perhaps — I have

been thinking and thinking where you could have spent the night; you did not look as if you had come from the town!"

"I dare say not," said Hamilton, laughing; "most probably I look as if I had spent the night among the rocks, and that is actually the case: I lost my way yesterday evening."

The peasant soon after joined them, and to Hamilton's eager inquiries as to the result of the hunt, he replied that a chamois had been shot in the evening, but that the disappearance of a young Englishman who had gone out with them, had spoiled every thing; they had searched for him until dark, and that Baron Z—— had been out to look for him before day-break; even the ladies had joined in searching, and one of them had been up nearly to the top of one of the mountains with the goatherd.

"Good heavens!" cried Hamilton, springing on his feet, "they are searching for me. I must go to them directly."

"It will do just as well if I send Peter to let them know you are here," said the peasant, calling one of his sons and giving him the necessary directions: after which, murmuring the words, "with your leave," he seated himself at a little distance, and glancing towards Hamilton's out-

stretched feet, he observed with a smile, "You would never have got up and down the alp again with those boots !"

"I believe you are right," answered Hamilton, listlessly moving them so as to have a better view — "they certainly do look the worse for the wear. I never was so ill shod in my life !"

"I dare say yesterday you might have danced at a wedding in them, but for the mountains they are not the right sort."

"Most true," said Hamilton, "and if I ever make an excursion of this kind again, I shall not forget it. This is the first time in my life that I have been in a mountainous country."

"And yet, England is a fine country they say ?" observed the peasant, interrogatively.

Hamilton assented with a nod.

"I have heard it said at the Golden Lion in the town, that there is no end to the riches of the English !"

"Some are very rich, and some are very poor," answered Hamilton ; "I believe the means of living — the necessities of life — are more equally divided among the inhabitants of Germany."

"Well, that I have heard too," said the man ; "and now that you tell me there are no mountains —"

"Stay," cried Hamilton, laughing, "I did not say that there were no mountains ; I only said that I had never seen them."

"But all the Englishmen I have ever spoken to —"

"Are not very many," said Hamilton, interrupting him.

"More than you think, perhaps. Before my father gave up the house and ground to me, I was for many years with a relation in Berchtesgarden, and used to row most of the strangers across the lake. Queer people they were, too, sometimes ! One gentleman used to sit for hours under a tree near the back lake, and went there regularly every day for several summers. The last time I saw him, he said when he died his spirit would hover round that tree — or something of that sort. I made inquiries about him lately, and as he has not been seen for a long time, I suppose he is dead, and should not at all like to go to that part of the lake alone of an evening ; for though I don't mind taking my chance against living men, I am mortally afraid of the dead — and that Englishman always looked half-dead, with his pale face and sunken cheeks — it was dreadful to hear him cough, and the people at the inn said he never was quiet at night, but

wandered incessantly up and down his room. They said he must have been crossed in love — ”

“ Most probably he was dying of consumption,” said Hamilton.

“ Very likely, that was what the doctor called it. He said it was a very common complaint in England — like the rheumatism here, I suppose. What my poor grandfather suffered from rheumatism the last forty years of his life is incredible; but he walked about and lived all the same to be past ninety years of age—and celebrated his golden wedding too ! ”

“ His golden what ? ”

“ Wedding. Perhaps you have no golden or silver wedding in England ? ”

“ I confess I never heard of any thing of the kind,” said Hamilton.

“ Oh, the silver wedding is only on the twenty-fifth anniversary, and most people can celebrate that; but to be fifty years married and to have a golden wedding, is a sort of event in a family. Though but a boy at the time, I shall never forget that day. This house was quite covered with garlands, and all the neighbours from far and near were assembled, and my grandfather and grandmother, dressed in their wedding-dresses, walked in procession with music to the church, and the

priest married them over again, and preached a sermon that every one had tears in their eyes. We had a dinner, too, at the "Lion," and such dancing and singing, and in the evening there was no end to the noise and shouting when they drove off together for the second time as bride and bridegroom ! "

"How I should like to see such a wedding ! Is there no chance of one now in the neighbourhood ? "

"Not that I know of. It is a rare thing, for generally a year or two before the fifty years are at an end one or other dies. The very wish to live it out carries the old people off, I believe."

"Do people marry early here ? "

"Not often, for they must get the consent of the parish, and prove that they can support a family. I was past forty before my father resigned the house and land to me."

"So he gave it to you during his life-time ? Is that often done ? "

"Very often. I was to have paid him a pension, and he intended to have removed to the town, but he could not leave the place, and so we all lived together until his death. My mother is still alive. You may have seen her on the alp : she is always wandering about there."

"Was your father obliged to ask the consent of your landlord when he resigned?"

"He was obliged to get the consent of Government, and I had to pay the usual fine of five per cent. of the value of my house and ground."

"Then you have no lease?"

"Lease! No, we have no lease."

"And your land is hereditary in your family?"

"Yes; we have the usual taxes to pay, and we have fines in cases of death, succession, or exchange of land."

"Could you sell your property if you wished it?"

"No doubt,—if I obtained the consent of Government; but who would sell their land and be without house or home?"

"I suppose it is always the eldest son who inherits?"

"No; we can make whichever child we please our heir; but we generally choose the eldest son, who pays the other children what is left them by will."

The peasant's wife drew near, and afterwards the children gathered round them; their mother, in the pride of her heart, telling them to fetch their copy-books, and show the gentleman how well they could write; he had not finished the

inspection, or praised them half as much as they deserved, when the Z.s and their companions advanced from the wood, and joyful recognition and long explanations completely changed the current of his thoughts.

CHAPTER VI.

SECULARIZED CLOISTERS.

WHEN Hamilton returned to Seon he found there an addition to the guests he had left, in the person of Count Zedwitz's son, a young officer who had come to spend part of his leave of absence with his family. His appearance was prepossessing, notwithstanding his very decided ugliness, for his yellow hair, impertinently degenerating into red in his bushy moustachios, nearly concealed a mouth of enormous proportions, and heightened the whiteness of teeth of faultless purity, but unusually large and of irregular form. The almost flaxen eyebrows protruded far beyond eyes which were small and light-coloured, but full of intelligence; the nose thick, of indefinite form, and a forehead which would have delighted Gall, Spurtzheim, or Combe, but from which a painter's eye would turn away to seek some more pleasing object; his figure was tall and well-proportioned, but, notwithstanding his

youth, already denoted an inclination to stoutness.

Hamilton found him an agreeable companion; indeed, every one seemed to like him, especially Mademoiselle Hildegard, who, Hamilton imagined, received his unobtrusive attentions with undisguised satisfaction; nor was it long before he discovered a sort of avoidance of his society on the part of both sisters. Crescenz, indeed, looked at him sometimes, but the moment her eye caught his it was averted, and a blush was sure to follow. Hildegard never looked at him at all. They whispered together continually, took long walks alone, and became every day more melancholy. In short, there was something mysterious in their manner which excited Hamilton's curiosity, and he determined to see Crescenz if possible alone for half-an-hour, and question her on the subject; but this was not easily managed, for Hildegard seldom left her side, and were she present there was no chance of hearing anything. He commenced a system of watching, which Crescenz unfortunately misinterpreted, while Hildegard remained perfectly unconscious of it; he did not apparently interest her sufficiently to make her observe his movements; but Crescenz's blushes increased daily, and even her

sister's presence could not prevent her from sometimes entering into conversation with him. He asked her once if Seon had disappointed her—if she were tired of it; and then, in a low voice, why she looked so sorrowful. A blush, a reproachful look, and eyes suddenly full of tears, was the only reply he received. Hildegarde, who had partly heard the questions, drew her sister's arm within hers, and left him alone to think over all possible causes, but in vain; he then turned his observations towards her step-mother, but there he was completely at fault. She was very kind in her manner to Crescenz, while to Hildegarde she seemed to have increased in severity.

One day Crescenz descended to dinner with eyelids so swelled from crying that her eyes were almost closed; her sister so pale, that Hamilton expected every moment she would faint: after a few ineffectual efforts to swallow, they rose suddenly and left the room together. Madame Rosenberg, who was sitting beside Major Stultz, made some hasty remark and followed them. She had not, however, been absent more than a few minutes when she returned with Hildegarde, and pointing angrily to her place at the table, desired her “to sit down there, and leave her sister

in peace." She obeyed, but made no attempt whatever to eat. Young Zedwitz, who had established a sort of right to sit beside her, endeavoured to begin a conversation; without raising her eyes she said a few words in a low voice, which at once made him desist, and he scarcely looked at her again during the time he remained at table.

It was a magnificent afternoon, and Hamilton was burning with curiosity, which he had determined to satisfy by some desperate effort during the course of it: his dismay was, therefore, great when he found himself seized upon by old Count Zedwitz, and carried off to his room for a dissertation on the water cure! As a reward, or rather punishment, for the exaggerated expressions of interest lavished upon cold water, on a former occasion, a manuscript was confidentially produced, written by himself, intended for publication, and of which he proposed Hamilton's making a translation for the benefit of his countrymen! He commenced slowly reading aloud, occasionally stopping to make alterations and corrections, while Hamilton gazed wistfully out of the open window at the sunny landscape, his thoughts wandering unrestrainedly to Crescenz and her sister. They would have gone out to walk

and he should probably not see them until supper time. Zedwitz would, of course, contrive to join their party, as he was evidently getting up a serious flirtation with Hildegard; he, for his part, rather preferred Crescenz, who he was sure he could persuade to give him a rendezvous—perhaps even in the cloisters! Five minutes—only five minutes without her sister—he composed the most appropriate speeches, and the running accompaniment to his thoughts formed by Count Zedwitz's manuscript, almost made him laugh in spite of himself and his annoyance.

At length the sound of gay voices in the garden beneath brought his impatience to a crisis, he sprang from his chair, placed his head in his hands, and declared he had such a violent headache that he must beg to defer the conclusion of the manuscript until the next day.

"Headache! My dear sir, if you would not think me unfeeling, I should say that I rejoice to hear it! I shall now be able to make a convert of you at once. Headache, be it nervous or rheumatic, can be cured by placing the feet in a tub of cold water and rolling wet cloths round the head."

"I think a quick walk would set me to rights in a very short time, and as I hear your son sing-

ing in the garden, perhaps I shall be able to persuade him to join me."

"If you don't like the footbath—try a little sweating in wet cloths—indeed it will cure you—pray try it."

"My dear Count—my headache is of a very peculiar kind; I am subject to it, and have given it the name of 'bored headache.' I know from experience that nothing but a walk can cure me."

"Bored headache! To bore—to penetrate—to pierce—to bore with a gimlet! You feel, perhaps, as if some one had been boring at your head," and he suited the action to the words.

"Precisely—exactly. In such cases I require violent exercise—"

"But I assure you," he persisted, "the cold stupes would have the same effect; I should still, merely to convince you, recommend sweating in—"

"Excuse me this time," said Hamilton, hurriedly, "and to-morrow if you will have the kindness to read me your manuscript, I shall be able to appreciate its merits as it deserves."

While the Count was taking off his spectacles, Hamilton, with his hand pressed on his forehead, left the room as if he were suffering tortures. It was fortunate that the old man's rheumatism

prevented his looking after him as he ran along the corridor and bounded down the staircase into the garden! Young Zedwitz was gone, and his mother and sister were standing so near the door that in the eagerness of flight Hamilton stumbled against them. He apologized, and then asked for Count Max, whom he said he expected to have found in the garden.

"He was here a minute ago," answered she, "but is gone to look for somebody or something; I did not quite understand what he said."

"It is very unkind of Max not to walk with us," observed the young lady, with some irritation; "he knows how dreadfully afraid I am of cows and dogs."

Hamilton thought she looked at him, as if she expected that he should offer to accompany her in the character of protector. This, however, he resolved not to do, and was in the act of retiring when the old Countess exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Hamilton, if you are not otherwise engaged, perhaps you will accompany us in our walk? My daughter is so easily frightened that she cannot go any distance without some one to chase away the cattle."

Hamilton felt doomed. The request had not been made in the most flattering terms, it is true, but he could not do otherwise than acquiesce.

The thought that young Zedwitz was at that moment, perhaps, walking with the sisters, did not make him feel amiably disposed, and he was considerably out of temper when he commenced his walk. This could not, however, continue, for both his companions were agreeable, and though the old Countess suffered considerably from asthma, in ascending the hills, she contrived, nevertheless, to commence a conversation, as it appeared to Hamilton at first, in order to learn something of him or his family. Not, however, finding him disposed to be communicative, she desisted from anything but indirect observations, which rather amused him than otherwise, and then spoke unreservedly of her own affairs.

“They lived on one of their estates in the neighbourhood of Munich, but they had spent the last two winters in the latter place, on account of their daughter. It had not agreed with the Count, and as her daughter was now *braut* (a bride), that is, engaged to be married, they should in future live altogether in the country. They had another residence in the mountains, near Baron Z —, which she would greatly prefer, but the Count fancied the mountain air increased his rheumatism. She supposed her son had told him all this, however.”

"Our conversation has been principally about Munich, and he has persuaded me to spend next winter there."

"Were your movements so uncertain? Do your parents leave you completely at liberty?"

"Completely. I can spend the winter at Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, or Munich."

The conversation was changed, and Hamilton was so pleased with both his companions, that he was actually sorry when they reached Seon, though the walk had been long, and it was so late that the guests were assembling for supper.

"Where are my girls? Are they not yet returned?" asked Madame Rosenberg.

No one had seen them.

"They were with me the whole morning," she continued, "and only went out half-an-hour ago to the church at the other side of the water. Perhaps Mr. Hamilton will be so kind as to call them to supper."

"Let me go with you," cried young Zedwitz, starting from his chair.

"Thank you — I can find them without your assistance," he replied, and then added, maliciously laughing, "I know you have been lounging about this little lake all day, my good fellow, and must be as tired of it as a sentinel of his post."

Zedwitz laughed too, but he was not so easily put off—he took Hamilton's arm and they sallied forth together.

“You were long on guard to-day, Zedwitz, from dinner time until now!”

“How did *you* like being caught to drive away the cows? I saw you being led off.”

“At first I did not like it at all—afterwards, very much. I have taken a great fancy to your mother—still more to your sister.”

“My sister is the dearest little soul in the world. If you but knew her as well as I do! I am very sorry she is to be married so soon—her loss will to me be irreparable, and our house so intolerably dull without her, that I shall be under the necessity of choosing a wife with as little delay as possible.”

“Your mother told me she expects you will make a most desirable marriage.”

“With my ugly face?—that is not very probable.”

“I understood from the Countess, that you, as well as your sister, were already engaged.”

“By no means—certainly not,” cried Zedwitz, with a vehemence incomprehensible to Hamilton; “joining hands for the purpose of joining estates is not at all to my taste.”

"I should suppose not," observed Hamilton, carelessly, and a long pause ensued. At length Zedwitz observed abruptly, "My parents are anxious for me to quit the army and marry; and yet I am quite convinced that when I propose doing so they will object to the person I have chosen. In spite of my ugliness, or rather, perhaps, on account of it, personal beauty has a value in my eyes beyond what it deserves. I could not marry an ugly woman—could you?"

"I have never thought much on the subject," replied Hamilton, laughing. "My parents have strictly forbidden all such thoughts on my part for the next ten years at least."

They now began to cross the shallow part of the Seon lake, on a long, narrow, wooden bridge, so narrow that it was inconvenient for more than two persons to walk abreast. When they had reached the slope leading up to the church on the other side, Hamilton suddenly stopped and asked Count Zedwitz what "Hildegarde had said to him at dinner, which had so effectually silenced him?"

"She told me not to speak to her, as she could not answer me."

"Was that all?"

"Yes; but she gave me some hope that she

would tell me why on some future occasion, and I was satisfied."

"There is some mystery in the family! don't you think so?" asked Hamilton.

"I am quite convinced of it. Those poor girls seem very unhappily situated. I really pity them!"

"I both pity and admire them," cried Hamilton; "and, moreover, I am exceedingly anxious to find out this same mystery. Let us start fair and see who will first obtain information."

"Agreed."

"My chances are but small," observed Hamilton, "with me both the young ladies are shy, and I myself am still more so!"

"You shy!" exclaimed Zedwitz, laughing.

"What! you don't believe me! You must have observed how I blush for the merest trifle!"

"Oh, yes—you blush, but it seems to be constitutional, however, for I never saw any one of your age so self-possessed."

"My dear Count, you quite mistake my character, I assure you—it is a sort of—*anomaly*; a mixture of modesty and assurance——"

"Assurance, perhaps—sometimes—the modesty I have never observed." He stopped and pointed to the two sisters, who were sitting on the trunk

of a prostrate tree in a neighbouring field, their hands clasped firmly together, and each separately exhibiting a picture of grief which, independent of the youth and beauty of the mourners, was interesting from the difference of its expression. Crescenz seemed quite subdued by excessive sorrow, her whole form drooped, and she wept in silence, the tears coursing each other over her youthful cheeks unrestrainedly. Hildegarde held a letter tightly pressed in her hand, and looked upwards. She might have been praying; but it seemed to Hamilton as if the eyes remained upturned to prevent the falling of the tears which had gathered in the underlids—an occasional almost imperceptible movement of the corners of the mouth, and an evident difficulty in swallowing, confirmed this idea.

“Beautiful creature!” exclaimed Zedwitz, enthusiastically.

Hildegarde stooped towards her sister and, it seemed, whispered some words of comfort, for the other looked up and attempted to smile.

“Hamilton, let us return towards the lake; it would be cruel to take them by surprise. We must talk loud, or in some way give them notice of our approach.” He turned away as he spoke, and so effectually did he put his intentions in

practice, that when they again approached the sisters, they were walking apparently unconcernedly towards the church, and on hearing that they were expected to supper, quietly led the way to the wooden-bridge. Zedwitz and Hamilton now commenced manœuvring; but as their intentions were similar and the object not to engage the same person, they were almost immediately successful. Zedwitz seemed, indeed, at first determined that Hamilton should lead the way with Crescenz; but the latter soon gave him to understand that that would never answer, and after a few frowns, and shrugs, and shoves, he followed Hildegard, who was already on the bridge.

Hamilton approached Crescenz and whispered hurriedly, "What is the matter? Why are you so unhappy? What on earth has occurred during my absence from Seon?"

"Nothing, nothing! Nothing, has occurred which can in any way interest you," she replied, walking quickly on.

"You are unkind, Mademoiselle," said Hamilton, slowly and reproachfully—"unnecessarily unkind; from the commencement of our acquaintance, short as it has been, I have felt the greatest interest in all that concerns you. I see you

unhappy — wish to offer any consolation in my power—and am treated with disdain.”

“I did not mean to treat you with disdain,” said Crescenz, softening, and walking more slowly.

“Your sister is not so cruel to Count Zedwitz.” In fact, they were just then speaking rather earnestly. This had great effect.

“What do you wish to know?” she asked, gently.

“I wish to know the cause of your unhappiness; I wish to know why you avoid me.”

“That I cannot tell you so easily! You will hear perhaps,—but you will not understand what—that is—how—I mean to say why I could not refuse. I—I cannot tell you,” she cried, bursting into tears, and walking on so quickly, that she had nearly reached her sister before Hamilton could say in a whisper, “To-night, at the foot of the broad staircase leading to the cloisters—may I expect you?”

“No, no, no!”

“There will be moonlight; at nine o’clock I shall be there.”

“Oh, no!—not for the world!”

“The staircase is quite close to your room; grant me but five minutes only.”

Her sister looked round, and to prevent fur-

ther discussion, he added urgently, but looking at the same time with affected unconcern across the lake,—

“You *must* come, or I shall spend the whole night in the cloisters waiting for you.”

It was in vain she now endeavoured to refuse, he was deaf to all excuses, and walked purposely so near her sister, that she was obliged to give up the attempt.

Before they entered the house, Zedwitz whispered triumphantly, “I shall know *all* to-morrow morning.”

“And I to-night,” replied Hamilton.

“What? when? how? where?”

“That is my affair, not yours.”

“I shall find out, you may depend upon it.”

“I defy you,” cried Hamilton laughing; but the next moment heartily regretting his foolish boast, he thought for a moment of telling him his purpose, but the fear of compromising Crescenz, deterred him, and soon afterwards perceiving him earnestly engaged in conversation with Hildgarde, he hoped he would forget all about the matter.

After supper, Madame Rosenberg, as usual, produced her knitting, and Hamilton begun a listless sort of conversation with her, which lasted

until her daughter had left the room; it suddenly, however, took a turn, which rendered it to Hamilton interesting in the extreme. She had, according to her own account, a most particular fancy for all Englishmen. They were such agreeable companions; gave no trouble at all; she had reason to know, for she had had Englishmen lodging in her house for the last three years. She had two furnished rooms, which she always let, and from experience she now knew that Englishmen were in every respect desirable lodgers! Need it be said, that "on this hint," Hamilton had spoken, and that in a very short time an arrangement for board and lodging was concluded to their mutual satisfaction. It was then that she launched into praises of his nation, ending with the remark, that nothing would induce her, now that her step-daughters were at home, to receive any but Englishmen under her roof. "They were accustomed to domestic life, to female society, and did not think it necessary to talk nonsense to every girl with whom they happened to be five minutes alone. Did he know Mr. Smith?"

Hamilton believed he knew two or three Smiths.

"I mean a Mr. Howard Seymour Smyth."

"No;" Hamilton knew more Howards and Seymours, than Smiths, he was happy in the consciousness.

"Perhaps you know Captain Black?"

"I have not the pleasure of his acquaintance."

"He was a most delightful person; lodged with us last year; dined, however, at Havard's *table d'hôte*. You will be the first who has actually become a member of the family, as I may say. I wonder what Rosenberg will think of the arrangement."

"May I beg of you to write to him to-morrow on the subject, as I have already given a sort of commission to the Baroness Z—— and—"

"Oh, dear! there's no necessity for writing; I always arrange these things alone; you have nothing whatever to do with him!"

"In that case, I may consider the affair as arranged," said Hamilton, rising and going towards the side-table for his candle. She rose too, and they ascended the stairs together.

"I shall do everything in my power to make you feel comfortable and at home in our house," she said, when wishing him good night.

As he entered his room, the great clock struck nine. He placed with some natural trepidation his candle behind the stove, and locked his door

carefully, to prevent Zedwitz, should he come, from ascertaining whether he were there or not. "He will think, perhaps, that I am in bed and asleep if he get no answer," was his wise reflection as he dropped the key into his pocket and commenced walking on tiptoe towards the place of appointment. A few moments' thought convinced him that there was no necessity whatever for concealment, until he had reached the lower passages, where there were flower-stands, gardening tools, old doors, casks, and all sorts of lumber heaped up, as if on purpose to make places of retreat for gentlemen in his situation. He ensconced himself behind a capacious beer barrel, and waited patiently until he heard a step on the stairs: keeping carefully in the dark, he whispered, "I am here, give me your hand." But no hand was given; on the contrary, a scampering up stairs, three or four steps at a time, ensued, which was at first perfectly incomprehensible. Hamilton afterwards supposed, that Crescenz had heard some noise in the corridor, and must wait for a better opportunity. Again he placed himself behind the friendly cask, and waited upwards of half-an-hour. At the end of that time, an odd rustling noise among the lumber made him start, but muttering the word "rats," he flung

an old rake in the direction from whence it came, and all was still again. It had become so much darker, that he now took up his post near the staircase, and soon after, Crescenz appeared, looking timidly down into the obscurity, "I am here, do not be afraid; there is no one near," cried Hamilton, softly advancing towards her.

"I have only come—to say—that—that I cannot come."

Hamilton in vain endeavoured to, repress a smile. "Well, come down the stairs and at least tell me why?"

She descended a few steps.

"Well! why?"

"Because I have not courage; I am always afraid in the dark."

"But it is not dark in the cloisters, there is the most beautiful moonlight imaginable! Come."

"Would not to-morrow at six o'clock, in the garden, do as well?"

"I cannot hear you," answered Hamilton, becoming suddenly deaf; "and you had better not speak too distinctly, as you may be heard by some one crossing the passage."

"To-morrow morning in the garden," she softly repeated, descending close to where he stood.

"I have been waiting nearly an hour!" was

the answer which he gave, in order to change her thoughts.

"I could not help it: Hildegarde has only just fallen asleep."

"We must not remain here, or we shall certainly be overheard. Come," he whispered, drawing her arm within his.

"I cannot—I cannot—to-morrow before breakfast, or when you will; but not now. Let me go! oh, let me go!"

And he would have let her go; but the thoughts of Zedwitz' raillery made him resolute. His first thought was to carry her off, but that appearing too strong a measure, he contented himself with holding her hand fast while pouring forth a volley of reproaches.

"And now," he concluded, with an affectation of reasoning: "Now that you are so far, why retreat? Every one is in bed; no human being in the cloisters. I ask but five minutes; but I would speak with you alone—unrestrained."

And while he was speaking he had contrived to make her move along the passage. A moment after they had reached the quadrangle, and stood in silent admiration of the calm seclusion of the spot. The echo of their footsteps was the only sound they heard; and the bright moonbeams not

only lighted the monuments erected against the wall, but rendered almost legible the epitaphs of those whose tombstones composed the pavement.

He led Crescenz to a seat near the monument of the founder of the monastery, Count Aribio, and waited for her to speak;—she had, however, no inclination to begin, but sat in a deep reverie, looking fixedly on the ground; and, as it seemed, more inclined to be sentimental than communicative.

Hamilton, more conscious than she was of the impropriety of her situation, and fearing that they might be seen by some of the servants, at length exclaimed with some impatience,—

“Do not let us lose these precious moments, but tell me at once what has occurred.”

Crescenz became agitated, covered her face with her hands, but remained silent.

“For heaven’s sake tell me what is the matter!”

“I am very, very unhappy!” sobbed the poor girl.

“But why?—why are you unhappy?”

“Because I—I am going to be married!”

“Married!—To whom are you going to be married?”

“To—to—Major Stultz.”

“Major Stultz!—Why this must be a very sudden business, indeed. Before I left Seon he seemed much more inclined to marry your sister than you!”

“Oh, of course he would rather have married Hildegarde, because she is so much cleverer and handsomer than I am; but she would not listen to him, and called him an old fool!”

“I admire her candour,” said Hamilton.

“And then she got into a passion when he persevered, and slapped him on the mouth!”

“Slapped him on the mouth!”

“Yes, when he attempted to kiss her hand; at least he says so: and Hildegarde thinks it may be true, as she was angry and struggled very hard to release her hand. He told mamma that he would not marry her now if she were ten times handsomer and a princess into the bargain!”

“She seems of rather a passionate temperament.”

“Passionate! yes, she sometimes gets into a passion, but it is soon over, and then she can be so kind to those she loves! No one knows her so well as I do, excepting, perhaps, papa, and he says, if she were not passionate she would be faultless: with me she is never in a passion.”

“Perhaps because you yield implicit obedience

to all her commands? But tell me why did not you follow her example, and refuse Major Stultz, if you did not like him?"

"He did not ask me, he spoke to mamma, and wrote to papa; and when all was arranged I had not courage to refuse; and he is forty-six years old, and I shall not be sixteen until next year!"

"That is a considerable disparity, certainly."

"I should not mind the thirty years so much if his face were not so red and his figure so stout. I hate red-faced stout men!"

"If he could change his appearance to please you, I have no doubt he would do so," observed Hamilton, smiling.

"Hildegarde also dislikes red-faced men," she added, pettishly.

"Whatever Hildegarde says must be right, of course," said Hamilton, ironically; "but I have not discovered that she dislikes Count Zedwitz, and he rather comes under the denomination red-faced."

"Hildegarde says Count Zedwitz is very agreeable, and not in the least presuming."

"And who does she say *is* presuming, if I may ask?"

"She says you are—or would be, if you were allowed."

"I think she is wrong. And were she to meet Zedwitz here alone—"

"Hildegarde would never do such a thing—never! And I ought not to have come, either," she cried, starting from her seat and looking anxiously round. Then, laying her hand heavily on his arm, and straining her eyes as if to see something more distinctly, she asked, in a scarcely audible voice, "What is that?"

"What?—I see nothing."

"There—there—in the corner! The moon is shining on it now—that figure."

"Oh, that is a stone figure—a monument, or something of that sort. Let us go and look at it."

"Not for the universe—I saw it move."

"You fancied it moved; one can imagine all sorts of things by moonlight. Will you remain here, and let me examine it?"

"Oh, no—you must not leave me! I—I think it may be something unearthly. Oh, why did I come here?—why did I come here?"

"Don't be unnecessarily alarmed, I am convinced it is nothing but—"

"There, there—it moved again!" She grasped his arm and hid her face on his shoulder.

"Come," said Hamilton, encouragingly; "let me take you to your room—to your sister."

She trembled violently, but endeavoured to walk. The figure, however, seemed to possess the power of fascination — she would or could not remove her eyes from it; and though Hamilton assured her he remembered having seen it by daylight, and at first really thought so, he was soon unpleasantly convinced of his error. They saw the outline more and more distinctly every moment, could even distinguish the large folds of the drapery in the moonlight. Hamilton tried to hurry her forward; but at that moment the figure, slowly and stiffly raising an arm, pointed threateningly towards them. This was the *acme*. Crescenz clung to him in an agony of terror; and while Hamilton whispered to her, "For heaven's sake, not to scream—to think of the consequences were she to be discovered," she writhed, as if in strong convulsions, gasped frightfully once or twice for breath, and then sunk on his arm perfectly insensible.

Shocked beyond measure, but now convinced that some one had been amusing himself at their expense, Hamilton called out angrily, "Cease your mummeries, whoever you are—and see what you have done!"

The moonlight fell on Crescenz's lifeless form while he spoke, and in a moment Count Zedwitz

stood beside him. He endeavoured to exculpate himself by vowing that he had no idea of playing ghost when he had followed them.

"I don't care what you intended," cried Hamilton, still more angrily; "but I wish, at least, you had spared this poor girl such unnecessary terror."

"I did not think of the consequences. It was very foolish—it was very wrong, if you will. But you must not think I was a listener: I declare most solemnly I did not hear one word of your conversation."

"The whole world might have heard it!" cried Hamilton, impatiently shaking off the hand which Zedwitz had placed on his shoulder; "the whole world might have heard it. But, what is to be done now? she shows no sign of life, and is as cold as a stone. Perhaps you have killed her!"

"Oh, no, she has only fainted; let me go for a glass of water."

"Are you mad?" cried Hamilton, detaining him forcibly; "no one must ever know that she has been here with me—with us—"

"Oh, I thought I could—"

"I wish you would think rationally, and repair the mischief you have done."

"Let us take her to her sister; she will never

betray her, and will know best what means to employ for her recovery."

And between them they carried Crescenz along the passage and up the stairs. Fortunately, the first door led to her room, and Hamilton desired Zedwitz to knock gently, lest other people in the neighbouring rooms might be awakened. But it was in vain he knocked; Hildegarde seemed to be enjoying what is called a "wholesome sleep;" and at length, finding their efforts fruitless, Zedwitz volunteered to go in and waken her.

Hamilton heard the sleepy voice change into a tone of alarm, the anxious questions, and finally a request that he would leave the room. He did so, and in less than a minute Hildegarde opened the door in a state of great agitation. While Hamilton laid Crescenz on the bed, Zedwitz struck a light, and Hildegarde then asked him earnestly to tell her what had happened.

"My odious cloak has been the cause of all," he answered, evasively; "she saw me standing in the moonlight, and thought I was a ghost."

"Saw you standing in the moonlight?—when?—where? Oh, go away, both of you," she cried, vehemently, as the candle lighted her sister's pale features; "go away, and leave me alone with Crescenz."

They left the room and walked towards one of the windows looking into the quadrangle. After some delay Hildegard appeared, and a dialogue ensued which Hamilton thought unnecessarily long, as he was not able to hear what was said ; the moment, however, that he approached the speakers the door was closed, and he was left to make his inquiries of Zedwitz.

“ How is she ? ”

“ Better, or quite well, I forget which ; she fancied at first that she had been dreaming, but now she knows the contrary.”

“ Hum ! No doubt you exaggerated splendidly when explaining to Hildegard just now ! ”

“ Not I ! I was thinking the whole time of that bewitching little nightcap, and how lovely she looked in it.”

“ Pshaw ! if you have any fancy for such caps, I recommend you to go to London. In any street you please, and at any hour, you can see half a dozen such caps on as many Bavarian girls, whose employment is to scream ‘ buy a broom,’ and who are just the most good-for-nothing creatures in the world ! ”

“ And how do you know that they are Bavarians ? I think it much more probable that they are Dutch girls.”

"In London people call them Bavarians; and I must confess they never interested me sufficiently to induce me to make inquiries."

"Very likely; but when I tell you that Bavarians do not lightly forsake their country, that they are seldom so poor as not to have enough to live upon—our marriage laws provide against that; that London is a long way from Bavaria, and the steam-packets make it an easy matter for Dutch girls to transport themselves there; you will also think with me, that they are more probably Dutch than Bavarian!"

"How warmly you defend your countrywomen and their hideous caps," cried Hamilton, laughing; "but really," he added, opening the door of his room, before which they stood, "really the matter is not worth a dispute. The girls are Dutch, if you will have it so, but the caps are ugly, say what you will."

"It depends so entirely on the wearer of the cap! For instance, to-night I thought that cap the most becoming thing I ever saw!"

"Perhaps you also prefer one foot in a slipper and the other bare."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that the fair Hildegarde could only find one slipper in the dark, and patted about with

her bare foot, as if it were the most comfortable thing possible ! ”

“ I did not look at her feet ; but even if I had, I should only have admired her forgetfulness of self in her anxiety about her sister.”

“ You are right, Zedwitz,” cried Hamilton, with unusual warmth, “ quite right ; and though I will not—cannot say that I think the night-cap pretty—I must acknowledge that I admired Hildegarde to-night more than any one I ever saw. She is superlatively handsome, and it is the greater pity that she is such a devil ! ”

“ A devil ! Are you raving ? ”

“ Not a bit of it. I advise you to take care how you make advances to her ; she will slap you on the month for the slightest misdemeanour.”

“ Slap me on the mouth ! ”

“ Not the smallest doubt of it. She buffeted poor Major Stultz when he innocently made her a proposal of marriage, until his face from deep red turned to the richest purple.”

“ Nay, now I know you are inventing—joking.”

“ Not so much as you think, I assure you. Her sister is my authority. She softened the recital in some degree, it is true, by saying that Hildegarde was not often in a passion, and never with *her*.”

Zedwitz seated himself at the table, drummed on it with his fingers, and looked at Hamilton, as if he expected to hear more.

"Perhaps, after all," said Hamilton, "she is only a little hot-tempered. I have heard it asserted that passionate people were always good-hearted—in fact, most amiable, when not actually in a passion!"

"Who would have imagined that?" said Zedwitz, thoughtfully, "and with such an angel's face!"

"Never trust an angel's face!" cried Hamilton, laughing. "My brother John, who understands such things, says that angelic-looking women are very often devils, and if not, they are bores; and of the two I prefer a devil to a bore, any day—even for a wife!"

Zedwitz rubbed his hand across his forehead and looked dissatisfied.

"So you think her ill-tempered?" he observed.

"I cannot exactly say ill-tempered, but I have already seen her in something very nearly approaching to a passion."

"You!—where?"

"No matter; but she called me a fool and stamped with her foot until I ran away for very fright."

"I dare say you had provoked her past endurance; and I have now had an opportunity of judging how shy and modest you are. Not that I mean to blame you for supporting Crescenz as you did to-night in the cloisters. You saved her, no doubt, from a severe fall, but you took very remarkably good care of her."

"It was very natural that Crescenz should cling to me when she was frightened," said Hamilton, seriously, "and equally natural that I should endeavour to protect her."

"Oh, it was altogether extremely natural, only don't talk any more nonsense about being shy. You were anything but shy at the foot of the staircase—"

"Were you there, too?"

"Not very distant from you, disguised as a rat."

"If I had managed to hit you with the rake all this scene would have been avoided."

"Perhaps; but do you know that you invited me yourself to come. I did not know where you were until you said in the most insinuating manner, 'I am here—give me your hand!'"

"So, you were the person who scampered up the stairs?"

"Yes, and scampered down at the other side, and found another way into the passage."

"Well, I hope I shall not remain long in your debt, that's all."

"Oh, your anger is over for this time, I hope. Rather let us now swear an eternal friendship. The thing is possible as we are not rivals."

"Perhaps we may be, though—I rather took a fancy to Hildegarde to-night. Crescenz is almost too childish."

"You are not serious, I hope," cried Zedwitz, with what Hamilton imagined an affectation of alarm.

"I really don't know whether I am or not. I am only trying to get up a sort of flirtation to make the time pass agreeably while I am studying German; for that purpose, in fact, one sister is as good as the other; indeed, Crescenz suits me, perhaps, better, because the affair will have a respectable termination when she marries Major Stultz."

"Is she to marry Major Stultz?"

"So, Hildegarde has not even told you that?"

"Not a word."

"Well, let us open the window and smoke a couple of cigars in the moonlight, and you shall hear all about it, and have a full and true account of the boxing-match between Hildegarde and the gallant major."

CHAPTER VII.

AN EXCURSION, AND RETURN TO THE SECULARIZED
CLOISTERS.

MADAME ROSENBERG “wondered” unceasingly the next morning, why Crescenz was not well enough to appear at breakfast. Zedwitz looked at Hamilton, and Hamilton looked at Zedwitz, and then they both looked at Hildegarde, whose eyes were fixed on the ground, leaving nothing but the long eyelashes, which rested on her cheek, visible. About the corners of her mouth played an expression which it was impossible to define—but it seemed that Zedwitz was able to interpret it to his own advantage, for he seated himself beside her, and began a conversation in the very easiest manner possible. Major Stultz was fully occupied with a monstrous edition of a meer-schaum pipe, and Hamilton turned to Madame Rosenberg, who showed every disposition to be friendly and confidential. From sundry winks and witticisms which she exchanged with Major Stultz,

Hamilton perceived that she wished to excite his curiosity, and longed to tell him of Crescenz's engagement. But he pretended stupidity, and carefully avoided all leading questions. Suddenly it occurred to him to propose a party to the Chiem lake the next day, and he was immediately warmly seconded by Zedwitz. Major Stultz took his pipe from his mouth to say that the weather was so warm they might expect a thunder-storm, which on that lake would be dangerous. Madame Rosenberg, with a few wise nods, observed that, "under existing circumstances," she thought that Crescenz might be allowed a little amusement, and the party was decided upon. Hamilton took Zedwitz aside, and asked him if he could not persuade his mother and sister to join them; told him, however, at the same time, what had been said about the Z.s.

"My dear fellow," was his answer, "the Z.s are just the people who would have joined the party at once; she likes being in all sorts of company, and he amuses himself every where, but nothing in the world would induce my mother or sister to go with these people."

"These people! Why, are they not respectable?"

"Respectable! oh, perfectly. Come, don't play

innocence and force me to explain what you understand as well as I do. The two girls are treasures, and would be presentable any where if they had but a '*Von*' before their name but their stepmother is vulgarity personified, and Major Stultz, you know, was a common soldier ! ”

“ I know nothing at all about Major Stultz, excepting that he is a red-faced, jolly-looking, elderly man. He must have distinguished himself during the war, or he could not have obtained his present rank.”

“ Yes, his personal bravery is undoubted ; he was also an excellent officer—covered with wounds—made the campaign in Russia, and was one of the few Bavarians who returned home to relate the horrors of the retreat. I advise you, however, to avoid the subject when he is present, as he is rather diffuse upon it. His brother, a Nuremberger tradesman, died about six months ago and left him a good deal of money ; his wounds afforded him a good excuse for retiring from the service, and applying for a pension, and he told me, honestly, that he has been looking for a wife ever since, as he does not know what to do with himself.”

“ The idea of taking Hildegarde to wife, in order to dispel *ennui*, was a proof of great discernment,” observed Hamilton, ironically.

"Rather say, most unpardonable effrontery," replied Zedwitz, growing very red.

"A man of his discrimination," continued Hamilton, provokingly, "must be aware that Crescenz is but a bad substitute for her sister — Hildegarde, too, would have suited him much better ; she would have kept him in order by — " here he waved his hand significantly.

"How you harp on that subject, Hamilton !"

"I shall never mention it again if it distress you. I was really not aware — "

"Pshaw !" he exclaimed impatiently, turning away.

"As to Crescenz, poor girl," continued Hamilton, "I really pity her — such a fearful difference of age and person makes it an odious sacrifice !"

"Not so much as you think, perhaps," said Zedwitz, quietly ; "Stultz is a good-hearted man, and will let her do whatever she pleases. You will see how soon she will be satisfied with her lot in life ! Perhaps even before her marriage !"

"It is at least to be hoped so," observed Hamilton, drily.

"The *trousseau* will soon occupy her mind completely, and while exhibiting it to her friends and receiving their congratulations, she will learn to like the cause of all the preparations, and end,

perhaps, by fancying herself a singularly fortunate person ! ”

Crescenz entered the garden while they were speaking, and blushed deeply as she passed them. Hamilton felt the blood mount to his temples, and turned away that Zedwitz might not observe it.

“ This is the beginning of the comedy,” cried the latter after a moment’s pause, touching Hamilton’s arm, to make him look round. He turned, and, through the foliage of the arbour, saw Major Stultz clasping a massive gold bracelet on Crescenz’ arm. She appeared for a moment embarrassed and shy — then played with a padlock or heart, or some such thing which dangled from the bracelet, and finally she looked up at him, and — smiled.

“ She is a thorough-bred coquette ! ” exclaimed Hamilton, indignantly. “ Zedwitz, I throw down the gauntlet and enter the list as your rival. I prefer running the chance of occasional chastisement from the fair hands of Hildegarde, to having anything more to do with such a silly, vain creature as this Crescenz seems to be.”

“ Seems to be, Hamilton — and only *seems*. The circumstances must also be taken into consideration. She must marry this Stultz, whether she like him or not. That he is not the *idéal* of

a girl of her age one can easily imagine. He suspects this, perhaps, and wisely commences by giving her a handsome present. That is probably the first gold bracelet she has ever had clasped on her arm. She is very young, childish, if you will, but neither silly nor very vain for feeling a little pleasure, and honestly showing what she feels. I see nothing reprehensible in her conduct."

"Had you but heard her last night telling me how unhappy she was!"

Zedwitz shrugged his shoulders.

"How she talked of his forty-six years, and declared her hatred of red-faced men!"

Zedwitz laughed.

She mentioned also, that her sister had the same antipathy.

"Sorry to hear it!" cried Zedwitz, picking up a handful of flat pebbles and pitching them one by one with considerable skill into the lake, watching them skimming along the surface with an interest that half provoked Hamilton.

"You seem to have a thorough contempt for my rivalry by daylight."

"What do you mean? Did you not tell me last night that Crescenz suited you exactly, as you only wished to amuse yourself for a time."

“Such *were* my intentions. May I ask what were yours? Or rather, what are yours?”

“Oh, certainly, you may ask, but you must forgive my not answering you, as I have not the most remote idea what I may be induced to do. I shall most probably be guided altogether by circumstances.”

He put an end to the conversation by walking towards the harbour where the arrangements for the next day's party were soon made. Major Stultz not venturing before Crescenz to say a word about storm or danger.

They left Seon at a very early hour the next morning in two carriages. Madame Rosenberg, as usual, took her three boys with her, in order, as she said, to keep them out of mischief. Fritz, the eldest, on finding himself separated from her, immediately found amusement in climbing from the carriage to the box, and from the box into the carriage again, causing Hildegard, who had charge of him, such anxiety lest he should fall on the wheel, that she could scarcely remain a moment quiet. Zedwitz assisted her so sedulously that he did not perceive an attack which Gustle directly commenced on the buttons of his coat with a blunt penknife; and Hamilton alone, unoccupied, half listened to the desultory conversation

of his companions, while admiring in silence the scenery, than which nothing could be more beautiful to an English eye. The fine old trees in the domain-like meadows which were bounded by extensive woods; the splendid lake appearing at intervals through openings which seemed made as if to show to advantage its extent, and the magnificent range of mountains beyond. The rippling of the water on the sandy shore brought at last such a crowd of home-recollections to his mind, that he leaned back, forgetful of all around him. Fritz's irritating gymnastics, Gustle's mischievous pertinacity, Hildegard's angelic face, and Zedwitz's amusingly enamoured expression of countenance! The sudden stopping of the carriage made him once more alive to everything going on about him. The little manoeuvres of Madame Rosenberg to place Major Stultz near Crescenz; the determination with which she insisted on Hildegard's sitting between two of her brothers; the third she gave in charge to Zedwitz, and Hamilton had the honour of being reserved for herself.

Hildegard and Crescenz were, for the first time in their lives, in a boat, and neither of them were quite at their ease. Crescenz exhibited her fear by various little half suppressed screams,

sometimes catching the side of the boat, sometimes the arm of Major Stultz. Hildegarde sat perfectly quiet, not venturing to look to the right or left, her colour varying with every movement of her unruly neighbours, who amused themselves by adding to the fears of their sisters by balancing the boat from side to side.

They landed first on the *Frauen Insel* (Woman's Island), hoping to be allowed to see the nunnery. While waiting for the necessary permission to enter, they wandered through the churchyard and into the church.

On the appearance of a tall, haggard, austere-looking man, in the long garment of a priest, Zedwitz advanced towards him, and begged admittance for the ladies; the scowling countenance convincing him at once that for him there was no chance whatever. He was volubly seconded by Madame Rosenberg, who with that want of tact not unusual on the part of uneducated women, actually attempted to be jocular with the awful-looking personage; but neither the polished address of Zedwitz, nor the jocularity of Madame Rosenberg could prevail. He refused without ceremony, and in very few words told them, that without bringing a permission from the "*ordinariat*" in Munich, they could not be admitted: the entrance of

strangers disturbed the nuns, and was against the rules of the convent.

They turned away, Crescenz observing, timidly, that she would not like to be a nun where there was such a severe confessor.

"I hope you have no thoughts of being a nun anywhere," observed the Major.

"I should have no objection to such a confessor," said Hildegarde: "I rather prefer one who has something imposing in his appearance; it gives me the idea that he is above the weaknesses of human nature."

"What nonsense you talk, Hildegarde," cried Madame Rosenberg, with evident irritation. "It is only a spirit of contradiction which makes you pretend to admire a man who has been so disagreeable and uncivil to us all."

Hildegarde walked more slowly, and Zedwitz, who had been lingering behind, immediately joined her.

"So you like stern-looking men!" he observed, in a low voice.

"I said I liked a confessor who had something imposing in his manner."

"Oh! for a confessor merely? But for a friend, a lover, or a husband, you prefer something quite different? Don't you?"

"Perhaps I should," she answered, carelessly.

"Or perhaps," said Hamilton, "you think of entering the nunnery here, out of pure admiration for that long gaunt man! There is no accounting for taste."

"I do not intend to take the veil until you have become a monk."

"When I become a monk, it will not be here; I shall choose a more hospitable place, and jolly companions, such as one generally reads of. The incivility of your friend with the austere countenance has greatly disgusted me."

The buildings on the other island were very extensive. The church had been turned into a brew-house, and not long after its desecration, it was burnt. "A very proper judgment," as Madame Rosenberg observed, glancing meaningly towards Zedwitz. Handsome broad marble stairs led to the upper apartments, of which a few have been lately modernized. The carved wood on the doors of the cells, and the picture frames in the refectory were admirable.

"Altogether," said Hamilton, looking out of one of the windows, across the lake—"altogether, a place where one could spend a fortnight very agreeably, with a gay party."

"Or with Hildegarde and her sister," said Zedwitz, in a low voice.

"If Crescenz were not so insipid with all her prettiness."

They adjourned to the garden, and dined under the trees. Hamilton studiously avoided Crescenz' vicinity, although he saw she was half disposed to be angry at his neglect. She endeavoured, in her simplicity, to pique him by listening with affected complaisance to Major Stultz' common-place remarks. She laughed, and encouraged him to give her brothers beer, when her mother was not watching them. This childish conduct perhaps Hamilton would have forgotten had not the consequences been somewhat remarkable. The boys, unaccustomed to drink anything but water or milk, soon became almost intoxicated, and on their way to the boat, Fritz, a good-humoured, handsome boy, swaggered, sung, and shouted most boisterously; Gustle became quarrelsome, and pinched and pommelled him unmercifully. It was in vain Madame Rosenberg scolded and threatened punishment; they had not left the shore more than ten minutes when a regular scuffle took place; Gustle flung Fritz's cap into the water, and Fritz, merely taking time to knock down the offender, leaned over the side of the boat, snapped

at his cap, and went heels over head into the lake! The screams of the ladies were beyond all conception piercing; Zedwitz, with an exclamation of horror, and regretting that he could not swim, leaned anxiously, and with outstretched arms, over the side of the boat. Madam Rosenberg started up and, with clasped hands, called for help in a voice of agony.

The danger was imminent. Hamilton sprang into the water and caught the boy as he rose, for the second time, at some distance from the boat; he was still conscious, and grasped his preserver's arm manfully. The scene which ensued it is impossible to describe. Gustle was boxed and Fritz was kissed, and Hamilton was thanked and blessed alternately. He declined entering the boat again, but partly held it and partly swam to the shore, where he heard with some surprise that the fishers who had rowed them, although they had spent half their lives on the lake, could not swim, so that had he not been there, Fritz would inevitably have been drowned.

From the commencement of his acquaintance with Madame Rosenberg, she had been disposed to like him, but from this event may be dated a sort of implicit reliance on her part, which afterwards caused him occasional qualms of conscience,

as he felt that he was trusted sometimes beyond his deserts.

Fritz's clothes were dried at the inn. Hamilton's, however, not being composed of such light materials, he was obliged to leave them there, and borrow whatever he could get from an obliging old peasant, who was profuse in the offers of his wardrobe. It was amusing to see him in the brown trousers, a "world too wide," intended to be long, but which, after tugs innumerable, could only be persuaded to half conceal the calves of his legs, whose proportions were rendered somewhat doubtful by the capacious grey worsted stockings in which they were enveloped; a long waistcoat of red cloth, and a remarkably short-waisted, long-tailed coat, in which a second edition of himself could have found place. These garments altogether formed a costume more original than becoming. Crescenz and Major Stultz laughed unrestrainedly; Madame Rosenberg repeated her thanks with a suppressed smile, but Hildegarde, without speaking, made a place for him beside her in the carriage, of which he incontinently took possession. He imagined that she spoke more to him than to Zedwitz, on their way home.

Crescenz's efforts to bring Hamilton back to

his allegiance were, for some days, as unremitting as they were various. She would never have succeeded had Hildegard been one jot less quarrelsome; but either from a naturally irritable temper, or some unaccountable antipathy on her part to Hamilton, they never spoke to each other without saying as many disagreeable things as possible. Hamilton felt that she disliked him and misinterpreted his every word and action, and this conviction, and the fear that she might discover how much he had begun to admire her, made him, perhaps, ready to meet her more than half way when she was disposed for battle. Their conversations generally began civilly on his part, but something in her manner, or some unnecessary sharp answer, was sure to provoke an ironical remark or a slighting gesture, which invariably led to the commencement of hostilities.

It was after one of these engagements, in which she had exhibited more than usual vehemence, and he had excelled himself in the art of tormenting, that he found Crescenz alone in the garden. The contrast was irresistible for the moment—it was calm and sunshine after a storm! There she sat, busily employed knitting a stocking which, from its dimensions, might probably be intended for Major Stultz! Her fingers and elbows moved

with a rapidity perfectly inconceivable; and as she had for the last four-and-twenty hours been enacting the sentimental and offended, he was allowed to admire her pretty face uninterruptedly as long as he chose; her heightened colour all the time convincing him that she knew he was looking at her. After a few significant coughs, which remained unnoticed, he turned to go away. She looked up and—sighed. This he imagined to be a sort of encouragement—perhaps it was intended for such, as the look which accompanied the sigh was reproachful. He seated himself beside her, while he admired the rapidity with which her work proceeded. The praises were unheeded.

“And who is the happy person destined to wear this?” he asked, playing with the huge piece of work.

“That cannot in any way interest you,” she answered stiffly, but she sighed again.

“Everything concerning you interests me; from the time I first saw you eating roast chicken even to the present moment—”

“You have an odd way of showing your interest, then. Hildegard says you are always laughing at me!”

“What do you mean?” he exclaimed, though knowing perfectly what she meant, and prepared

for the answer which he immediately received, and the implied reproaches for his neglect, which he had expected.

"But, Mademoiselle, you have told me yourself of your engagement—"

"Well, and what of that?"

"I could not think of interfering with Major Stultz. I dare not monopolize—"

"But, at least, you might speak to me sometimes."

"There might be danger for me were I to do so."

Crescenz looked immensely delighted and flattered, and her fingers moved faster than ever.

"Is it not customary here to consider an engagement almost as binding as a marriage?"

"I don't know," she replied, innocently; "I never was engaged until now; but," she added, hastily, "but we are not yet affianced,—that will not be until the day after our arrival in Munich."

"Then you are still at liberty to amuse yourself with others."

"Oh, yes."

"And I may talk to you without Major Stultz's having any right to be jealous?"

"Jealous!" she repeated, blushing.

"I meant to say angry. Men at his time of life are difficult to manage, but it seems you get

on famously with him, and have already forgotten all you said in the cloisters."

"What did I say?" she asked, looking up.

"Merely something about being very unhappy, and so forth."

"What's the use of being unhappy?" she asked, peevishly. "Mamma says I must marry some time or other; and such a man as Major Stultz is not to be found every day."

"I know not which is most to be admired, your astounding resignation or her excellent reasoning."

She looked at him for a moment, and then having satisfied herself that he was not laughing, she said confidently,—

"Mamma has been very liberal, and promises me every thing in fifties and hundreds."

"Fifties and hundreds!" repeated, Hamilton.

"The smalls in hundreds—the large in fifties!"

"You will undoubtedly think me very stupid, but I have not the most remote idea of what you mean."

"I am to get a *trousseau*, such as mamma herself had; all the smaller things, such as pillow-cases, towels, and stockings a hundred of each! Table-cloths and such things in fifties."

"Ha! That must naturally have made you think quite differently of Major Stultz!"

Again she looked at him inquiringly.

"No; it did not make me think differently of him — but what can I do?"

"You cannot do better than try to like him as fast as possible."

"If he had only a *Von* before his name!" she observed, sorrowfully.

"Why, what difference would that make?"

"If he were *noble* I should not mind the difference of age. *My* mamma was a countess!" she added, proudly.

"Then why not wish him to be a count at once?"

"No; that I could not expect, as I have no fortune, and papa is not a *von*."

"I should like to know the exact meaning of this *von*."

"It is the first grade of nobility; then comes ritter or chevalier; then baron, count, prince, duke. I wonder how mamma could have married any one who was not count or baron — but then, papa was so very handsome, and that makes a great difference!"

"Most undoubtedly! A handsome face is a good letter of recommendation."

"Are you noble?" she asked, abruptly.

"I have no *von* before my name," answered Hamilton, laughing.

"Are you not count or baron?"

"Neither."

"So you are only Mr. *Hameeltone*?"

"Only Mr. *Alfred* Hamilton."

He perceived that he had fallen deeply in her estimation, and — he fell in his own a few minutes afterwards, by a fruitless attempt which he made to explain to her the nature of the English peerage, and which he ended, by the assurance that had he been born in Germany, where every member of a family inherits the paternal title, he should, undoubtedly, have been a baron or count. She did not understand him, and he was glad of it, for he felt keenly the absurdity of his oration and the silly boast contained in the concluding remark. Where the *noblesse* is so extensive as in Germany, and where so many members of it are so extremely poor, one would naturally think it would fall in some degree into disrepute, or at least, that it would be regarded with indifference. This is, however, by no means the case, and there is no doubt that had her red-faced major been a count or baron, she would have willingly overlooked the other discrepancies. Even a *von* before his name would have been a consolation, when combined with the happiness of having had a countess for her mother. These were Hamilton'

thoughts during a pause in the conversation, and he partly continued to think aloud when he asked,

“ Was she handsome ? ”

“ Who ? ”

“ Your mother.”

“ I don't know—I cannot remember her.”

“ Are you—is your sister like her ? ”

“ Hildegarde is very like papa, and people say that I am very like Hildegarde.”

“ You are extremely like each other, especially at first sight.”

“ Oh, I know that Hildegarde is a great deal handsomer than I am ! ”

This was a fact, and Hamilton was puzzled for an answer, when she added, after a pause,—

“ But Major Stultz says I am much more loveable than she is ! ”

“ Major Stultz is a man of discrimination,” said Hamilton, looking round him listlessly.

“ He says, too, we shall be very happy when we are married ! ”

“ I hope so most sincerely.”

“ He gave me a great deal of good advice the day we were at Chiem See.”

“ Indeed ! On what subject ? ”

“ He said it was very foolish to trust very young

men—that they were very faithless, and good for nothing.”

“All! Did he say all?” cried Hamilton, in a tone of mock deprecation.

“Yes, all,” she answered, petulantly. “He advised me neither to trust them in words nor actions!”

“What extraordinary knowledge of the world he must have! Altogether a remarkable person!”

“You are laughing at me — or — at him.”

“Laughing! What an idea! Only look at me for a moment and you will be convinced of the contrary.”

And she did look at him, and her eyes filled with tears as they met the calm unembarrassed gaze of his. A heavy step on the gravel-walk announced the approach of some one, and on turning round they perceived Major Stultz blowing the ashes out of his meershaum pipe, as he leisurely walked towards a bank in the garden. Crescenz started as if she had been detected committing a crime, and, with heightened colour, rose to join him.

“I thought you said you were at liberty to talk to me as much as you pleased,” observed Hamilton, ironically.

“And so I am,” she replied, seating herself

again, whilst she glanced furtively towards her future husband. "What have you got to say to me?"

"Oh, a — what were we talking about? Major Stultz's excellent advice, was it not? I should really like to hear all that he said to you, for I can hardly think he spent his whole time in railing at men who have the good fortune to be a score of years younger than he is."

"Oh, we spoke of other things also."

"It would have been very odd if you had not."

"We — spoke — of love!"

"Very naturally. I really should like to know the opinion of such a man as Major Stultz on so important a subject."

"He said," she began, with a sigh,—"he said that people, especially women, seldom had the good fortune to marry their first love."

"Rather a trite observation, and, on his part, unnecessary. Surely if any man may hope to be the object of a first love, it is Major Stultz! You have only left school a few months — are not yet sixteen years old. What could he mean by talking to you about first love?"

She was silent.

"Perhaps it was as a preliminary to his confessions. Did he give you a history of his loves? Have they been very numerous?"

"No," she exclaimed, almost angrily; "he told me, on the contrary, that I was the first person he had ever wished to marry."

"Did you remind him of his proposal to your sister?"

This contradiction to his words seemed to have entirely escaped her memory; she coloured violently, and the ready tears again prepared to flow. Hamilton felt that he was amusing himself unpardonably at the poor girl's expense, teasing her beyond what she could bear, and was preparing to set all to rights again by playing a little sentiment, when she rose precipitately, and with such ill-concealed annoyance to walk towards Major Stultz, that instead of picking up her large ball of thread she drew it rashly after her, jerking it over the flower-beds, and entangling it so effectually in a rose-bush as she moved quickly on, that Hamilton ran to her assistance, and as he restored it to her said in a low voice, in French:

"This evening I shall be in the cloisters *before* sunset. Meet me there I entreat of you. I wish to ask your pardon, if I have offended you."

The shadows of evening had no sooner begun perceptibly to lengthen than Hamilton repaired to the cloisters, and amused himself endeavouring to decipher the epitaphs on the various tomb-

stones, until a light step close beside him made him look up, and he beheld—not Crescenz, but Hildegarde standing before him. He was about to pass her with a slight inclination, when she stopped suddenly, and, while she slightly blushed, said firmly,—

“I am the bearer of a message from my sister.”

“The willing bearer of her excuses, no doubt.”

“I understood it was you who were to have made excuses,” she answered, coldly.

“Very true. I had to ask forgiveness for having offended her in the garden to-day; as, however, the excuses are only intended for her ear, let us consider them made, and talk of something else.”

“I have neither time nor inclination to speak on any subject but the one which brought me here.”

“The communication must be important, if I may judge by the solemnity of your manner,” said Hamilton, looking calmly into the quadrangle.

“My sister desires me to say that she feels the impropriety of her former interview with you here, most deeply, and that nothing will induce her to consent to another. She has told you of her intended marriage: it is almost unnecessary to say, that under such circumstances a continuation of your present attentions will only serve to embarrass and annoy her.”

"Your sister never desired you to say that," cried Hamilton, fixing his eyes steadily on her face.

"Of this you may be assured," she continued, colouring deeply, "that my sister will not again meet you alone, unless—unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless you are more explicit and give her the power of choosing between you and Major Stultz. It is not yet too late!"

This was what may be called coming to the point at once, and Hamilton was so taken by surprise that he could only stammer something about the shortness of his acquaintance, and believing that he did not quite understand what she meant.

"I believe Crescenz does not quite understand what you mean," cried Hildegarde, indignantly. "How I wish she could see with my eyes, and learn to despise you as you deserve!"

"You are really too flattering," observed Hamilton, laughing, "much too flattering; but may I not be allowed to wish that you would see me with your sister's eyes, and value me as I deserve? However," he continued, glad of an opportunity to change the subject, "although you have just deprived me of a meeting with your sister, I shall not interfere with your intended *tête-à-tête* with Count Zedwitz."

The count advanced towards them as he spoke.

"Your good opinion is of too little importance to induce me to disclaim or enter into any explanation," she replied, turning quickly from him ; and bowing slightly to Zedwitz, she disappeared through one of the entrances to the cloisters.

"Hameeltone, that is not fair play," cried the latter, laughing ; "your presence here was not expected."

"You do not mean to say you came here to meet Mademoiselle Rosenberg ? "

"And why not ? You have met her sister here. Why may not I hope to be equally fortunate ? "

"Because—because—"

"Because you're handsome and I'm ugly, you think I have no chance ? "

"That was not what I meant. The difference between the sisters would rather form the obstacle—"

"Difference, indeed ! " exclaimed Zedwitz.

"The difference is in intellect," observed Hamilton ; "in person they are extremely alike."

"You mean, perhaps, in figure ? " asked Zedwitz.

"In feature, too," persisted Hamilton.

"Why, they have both brown hair, blue eyes, and red lips, if that constitute likeness ; but while

one has the mere beauty of extreme youth, the other is the most perfect model of female loveliness I ever beheld."

"You are very far gone," observed Hamilton, gravely.

"I am giving my opinion as an artist," he replied, smiling. "You will understand my enthusiasm when I tell you that I spend all my leisure hours studying portrait painting."

"You came here just now probably to take a sketch of this most perfect model? But tell me, honestly, did she promise to meet you here?"

"How can you ask such downright questions? There are different kinds of beauty, and different kinds of dispositions. I did not exactly judge it expedient to say, 'Meet me this evening in the cloisters;' but I talked of the beauty of the shadows here about sunset, and of my intention to finish a little *aquarelle* drawing of the said cloisters, with a Benedictine monk issuing from one of the adjoining passages—something just adapted for a lady's album. I came. Had you not been here, I have no doubt I should have obtained a few minutes attention in spite of my ugliness."

"She came here, however, expressly to meet me," observed Hamilton, maliciously.

The count stopped suddenly, and looked inquiringly in his companion's face.

"She came with a message from her sister," added Hamilton, quietly, and they again walked on together. "In fact," he continued, "when you joined us, we were in the midst of a kind of altercation which made your presence to me at least a great relief."

"An altercation! About what may I ask?"

"About her sister. She asked me in pretty plain terms what my intentions were, proposed my entering the lists fairly and honourably with Major Stultz; and when I demurred, she talked angrily of despising me, and so forth. Depend upon it she will call you to account before long."

"I am quite ready to be called to account."

"You do not mean to say you think seriously of marrying?"

"I should be but too happy! There is no such luck in store for me!"

"You think she would refuse you?"

"I don't know; but I know my father would refuse his consent."

"Run off with her, and ask his consent afterwards."

"I wish I could, but that is impossible here. Marriage is with us a civil as well as a religious

act. You have no idea of the formalities attending it, or the certificates necessary to make it valid ; besides which, my being in the army increases the difficulty. That cursed caution money ! ”

“ Caution money ? What is that ? ”

“ About nine hundred pounds of your money, without which no officer can obtain leave to marry. It is considered a sort of provision for his wife and children in case of his death, and is, probably, a very wise regulation, but is also sometimes a source of great vexation. I am by it completely placed in my father's power, for although I receive from him at present in addition to my pay ten times as much as the interest of the necessary sum, and though I know at his death I shall have more than a comfortable maintenance, yet as Hildegarde has no fortune, and I am not independent, our marriage is at present utterly impossible ! ”

“ I advise you at all events to speak to your father.”

“ I shall carefully avoid such a communication. Why, I cannot even hope for my mother's assistance, as the connexion would be in every respect disagreeable to her. I have but one hope. Through my sister's influence something may be done : she is a good child, and about to marry to please papa

and mamma; first of all, however, I must speak to Hildegarde herself."

"There you have everything to hope, for she is absolutely *civil* to you sometimes! You will probably enter into some interesting secret engagement?"

"That would be worse than folly. I could not be so ungenerous as to ask her to refuse, perhaps, an eligible establishment should one offer, on the chance that I should marry her, should I live to become a second edition of Major Stultz! Suppose I wait ten years, Hildegarde's and my ideas would both be changed. I do not feel quite sure that at the end of that time I might not prefer some gentle, simple Crescenz, who would overlook my age and ugliness provided I made her handsome presents, and supplied her liberally with *bon bons*. I wish you had seen her face of delight just before I came here, when Major Stultz gave her a box of *bon bons*, which evidently had been ordered from Munich expressly for her, as it contained nothing but sugar hearts and darts, and kisses wrapt up in pink and blue papers, and doves billing, while almost bursting with the liqueur with which they had been ingeniously filled by the confectioner!"

"So! Now I know why the little coquette did

not come to meet me! After having called me to account for my neglect so innocently, and talking such mysterious nonsense about her first love, she amuses herself eating sugar-plums, and sends her sister to me now. These German girls are inexplicable; one cannot talk to them without quarrelling, or being entangled in a labyrinth of sentimentality '.

"You must not judge of all from your slight acquaintance with two," observed Zedwitz, laughing. "You may say what you please, but you cannot deny that they are fine specimens of the species."

"Hildegarde is undoubtedly handsome, but then she is only amiable towards you," said Hamilton, leaning against the side of one of the arches. "I believe," he continued, after a pause, "I believe I am getting very tired of Seon, and, were I not engaged to these Rosenbergs, I should start at once for Vienna. Suppose we make a tour in the Tyrol together?"

Zedwitz looked embarrassed, and said, with some hesitation, "I — a — am — half engaged to join the Rosenbergs in a party to an alp, and afterwards to Salzburg."

"What! and I have never heard a word about it?"

"Oh, you will be invited as a matter of course. I had some trouble to manage it, as I do not enjoy the good graces of Madame Rosenberg. She expects her husband to-morrow, who comes here for one day to make the acquaintance of his future son-in-law. The day he leaves is fixed for our excursion."

"How do we travel? — boys, of course, inclusive?"

"In whatever carriages we can get from here. In Traunstein we take a *char-à-banc*, which will accommodate us all."

"For such parties it is a very agreeable vehicle, as we can all remain together; for when a division takes place, the chances that one gets a disagreeable companion are too great."

"*Videlicet*," cried Hamilton, laughing, "Count Zedwitz wishes to be quite sure of enjoying the society of a certain young lady for three whole days."

"You are right," he answered, taking Hamilton's arm to leave the cloisters. "Quite right. I trust you have given up all idea of being my rival?"

"I believe I must give up all such idea, if I ever had it, for Hildegard told me just now that she despised me; — had she said she hated me, I

might have some chance, but I am not equal to a struggle against indifference and scorn. I believe," he added, laughing, "I must make her hate me."

"But you won't interfere with me, I hope?"

"Not at all. You will appear more amiable by the contrast."

"What do you intend to do?"

"Were I to continue my present line of conduct," answered Hamilton, with affected solemnity, "it is possible that hate might be produced in time, but, in order to hurry matters, I shall be obliged to make desperate love to her sister. Hildegard seems very vulnerable on that point. It will not also cost me much trouble, as Crescenz gave me a fair challenge to-day in the garden, and cannot reproach me hereafter."

"Hamilton," cried Zedwitz, stopping suddenly, and looking at him attentively: "you are certainly older than you acknowledge to be."

"I understand the implied compliment," replied Hamilton. "You conceive my intellect beyond my years. My father always said I was no fool; I am glad to find that others are inclined to agree with him in this negative sort of commendation."

"You are indeed anything but a fool; and if you fall into good hands I have no doubt —"

“ Good hands !” cried Hamilton, interrupting him ; “ I have no idea of falling into any hands, good or bad : I intend to judge and act for myself.”

“ Then you will pay dear for your experience, as others have done before you.”

“ We shall see,” replied Hamilton.

“ You will feel,” said Zedwitz, seizing with both hands the ends of his long mustachios, to give them a peculiar twirl towards the corners of his eyes before he entered the room where the company were assembled for supper.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ALPINE PARTY.

THE next evening Madame Rosenberg invited Major Stultz and Crescenz to join her in a walk to meet her husband. Hildegarde was desired to remain behind, and take care of the children. Poor girl! she was not yet forgiven the atrocious crime of having refused Major Stultz; and this punishment she seemed to feel more than Hamilton could comprehend; for as the trio walked off together, and left her alone, her eyes filled with tears, and she seated herself on the stone steps of the entrance to the church with an air of such utter despondency, that he turned towards the lake in order not to annoy her by his presence, and even played with the two elder boys, to prevent them from tormenting her, until he heard the sound of wheels and horses' feet, when, looking towards the road, he saw, at no very great distance, a carriage, which stopped as it reached the

pedestrians, and out of which sprung a man, apparently much too young to be the father of either Hildegarde or Crescenz. The children, however, cried "Papa! Papa!" and rushed towards him. Hildegarde — (pardon the horrible idea) — Hildegarde moved backwards and forwards like a chafed tigress in a menagerie, not daring to disobey her stepmother by quitting the place assigned her, and yet exhibiting anger and impatience in every limb.

As the party drew nearer, Hamilton observed that Mr. Rosenberg was indeed extremely youthful-looking, and must have been eminently handsome. That he was a kind father was evident at a glance, for the children clung to his knees so that he could scarcely walk, and Crescenz had taken complete possession of one of his arms. Just as he reached the place where Hamilton stood, and after being introduced to him as "our English friend," his eyes turned towards the spot where Hildegarde was so uneasily perambulating. Releasing himself at once from his companions, he advanced hastily a few steps, calling out, "Why, how 's this, Hildegarde? Why don't you come to meet me?" With a cry of joy she rushed into his arms, and whispered in a voice almost suffo-

cated by emotion, "I dared not — I dared not!"

"You feel that you deserve to be scolded? Is it not so? Naughty girl!"

"But you have forgiven me—I know you have."

Another embrace, and a look of evident forgiveness, not unmixed with pride and admiration, was the answer.

Madame Rosenberg bit her lip, and observed, angrily,

"You really encourage Hildegard to give way to her violence of temper, instead of pointing out to her the impropriety of her conduct, as I expected."

"What is past, is past," he answered; "and Major Stultz is satisfied."

"Satisfied! I am the happiest man in the world!" exclaimed Major Stultz.

Crescenz smiled and blushed.

"Well, then, we are all happy. You take Crescenz, who is, if anything, too good and gentle, and I must for the present retain this passionate good-for-nothing girl!"

He played with her hand as he spoke, and the dullest looker on must have observed that she was his favourite child.

"You will very probably retain her all your life," observed Madame Rosenberg.

"I don't think I shall. Somebody will be sure to find out that she is as good hearted as she is passionate—ill-tempered she is not—the darling!"

"Oh, she is very good-tempered when she has everything her own way. And papa to spoil her! I don't envy the man who may get her."

"I shall not pity him," said her father, gently pressing her hand; and then turning to his wife and Major Stultz, seemed determined to change the conversation.

Hamilton left them, and when he found himself alone in the garden unconsciously began to consider — was, or was not, Hildegard amiable? or, was she merely a spoiled child, whose father, dazzled by her extreme beauty, thought faultless? Her sister certainly loved her, and the children, although they preferred Crescenz, assuredly did not dislike her—in fact, her stepmother alone seemed to think her ill-tempered, and he felt strongly inclined to come to the conclusion, that her father's evident partiality had provoked the jealousy of that apparently little-indulgent person.

On the ensuing day, Zedwitz and Hamilton had agreed that they would not give the Rosenbergs

so much of their society as usual, but knowing that they could make up for lost time afterwards, leave them to discuss their family affairs during the sojourn of Mr. Rosenberg. They prepared, with a very good grace, to spend the morning with Zedwitz' mother and sister in the garden, and, to the infinite surprise of both ladies, they seated themselves at the table in the arbour which they were in the habit of occupying. Agnes, who continued working with unnecessary assiduity, submitted for some minutes to be tormented, in a boyish manner, by her brother. He wrote upon the table with the point of her scissors, entangled her coloured wool and silk, upset her needle-case, and finally attempted to twitch her work out of her hand.

"You overpower me with your attentions to-day, Max," she at length observed, with heightened colour; "I am no longer used to them."

"You do not mean that you are annoyed at my playing with this trumpery?" he cried, moving from her with affected anxiety.

She pushed aside her work with a contemptuous shake of the head, and then leaning her little fresh-coloured face in the palm of her hand, she gently but seriously reproached him for his long

neglect of her, and his totally changed manner since he had come to Seon. He assured her, laughingly, that he had been only trying to wean himself from her society, as he was about so soon to lose her altogether. His mother said that moderation should be observed in all things, and though she did not require from him the attentions he had been in the habit of lavishing on his sister, yet she must say the contrast between his former and present manner was too striking not to be most painful to poor Agnes; and, for her part, she thought there must be some secret reason for such conduct. Here she moved uneasily on her chair, and coughed.

"Secret reason!" he exclaimed; "what can you mean? I am utterly at a loss to —"

"Come, Max, you must greatly underrate my intellect or powers of observation if you imagine that I have not seen what has been going on for the last three weeks."

"Going on?" he repeated.

"Yes, going on. You have been paying the most marked attentions to one of those Rosenbergs —"

"Which of them?" he asked, with an effort to look unconcerned.

His sister laughed, and said, "Confess, honestly, Max, for if you really are in love, I think I must forgive your neglect."

"Thank you, dear. You know I once forgave you the same offence when proceeding from the same cause."

"It is unnecessary," she said, glancing towards Hamilton, and growing perceptibly paler, "it is unkind to remind me so lightly of the most painful event of my life."

She was about to leave them, when her brother seized her hand, saying, eagerly, "Stay, you dear good creature, and forgive me. I quite forgot that Hamilton was present, but never mind him — pray stay. I confess that I am desperately in love with Hildegard Rosenberg, and I want you to tell my mother, and ask her to give me her assistance and advice."

His mother, of course, had heard what he had said, and now answered, quickly, "Assistance, Max, you cannot expect from me; my advice is, that you return to Munich to-morrow."

"I am engaged to ascend an alp with the Rosenbergs: indeed, I have promised to make an excursion with them which will last three days."

"You will not find us here on your return,"

said his mother, resolutely ; “ I totally disapprove of your conduct in every respect, and will not afford you the excuse of passing your time with us, in order to continue it.”

“ But, my dear mother — ”

“ I thought you were too honourable,” she continued, “ to pay attentions which could lead to nothing. You know your father will never consent to such a connexion ! ”

“ I hoped — through your influence — in time, perhaps — ”

“ Hope nothing in this case from me ; much as I desire to see you happily married, such a daughter-in-law — ”

“ I defy any one to point out a single fault,” cried Zedwitz, eagerly ; “ she is beautiful—Agnes, you who understand so well what beauty is, tell me — is she not beautiful ? ”

“ She is the most beautiful person I ever saw,” answered Agnes, warmly ; “ indeed, mamma, there is some excuse for Max’s admiration.”

“ I don’t blame him or any one for admiring her ; but Max spoke just now of more than admiration. He must not forget that she is *not noble*, and that her family are odiously vulgar.”

“ But she is not vulgar,” observed Agnes, kindly ;

"I have spoken to her two or three times, and think her a very nice person."

"Max knows that his father will never consent to such a match," answered her mother, "therefore, there is no use in talking more about the matter." She rose and prepared to leave them. "Want of fortune I could have overlooked, and you might have been sure of my assistance, although my hopes have long been fixed on another object; but — such a connexion as this — I never can — I never will sanction."

Zedwitz waited until his mother was out of hearing, and then drawing nearer his sister, said, —

"Well, Agnes, what is to be done now? Do you think she will tell my father?"

"I think not directly: she knows you can do nothing without his consent."

"Agnes, I have a right to your assistance, and claim it: your reproaches led to this premature discovery—"

"Not at all; mamma has been watching you the last three weeks."

"And pray why did not you tell me so?"

"I did not know it until a few days ago; and as you never come near me, or even look at me now,

I had no opportunity of speaking to you on that or indeed on any other subject."

"How well you women know how to mix up reproach and excuse together. If you had only just called me aside—"

"If I had, you would have given me the answer which I have so often received from you lately."

"And what may that be?"

Agnes rose playfully from her seat, with an appearance of extreme impatience, and exclaimed, while she looked around her, as if seeking some one else:

"My dear creature! any other time; but you see—just now in fact I am particularly engaged!"

Hamilton and Zedwitz laughed.

"You little actress!" exclaimed the latter, drawing her towards him, and making her again sit down on the bench beside him. "I acknowledge that I have neglected you unpardonably, Agnes; but you have promised to forgive me, and I now require your assistance—come, tell me what shall I do?"

"You really wish to marry this Hildegarde?"

"Most undoubtedly, if I can; but you know I am wholly in my father's power, and she has no fortune whatever."

"The case seems rather hopeless at present,"

said Agnes, seriously. "Have you spoken to her? Would she wait a few years?"

"I have not spoken to her," he answered, impatiently; "and as to waiting two or three years, I would rather give up the idea at once."

"That would indeed be the wisest thing you could do," cried his sister, eagerly; "for you may expect the strongest opposition from both papa and mamma. Do not join this alp party; you can easily find some excuse: and let us all go to Hohenfels together before these Rosenbergs return here."

"How lightly you talk, Agnes! just as if it only required a visit to the Zs at Hohenfels to make me forget the last four weeks! I tell you I can never love another as I do Hildegard: so you must propose something else."

"Are you quite determined to go with them to-morrow?"

"Quite."

"Suppose when you are gone I speak to papa; mamma will at all events tell him when she finds that you are actually off; but you know I can generally make papa do whatever I please—and if I explain to him that you are very unhappy—absolutely miserable—"

"Tell him that I am in the depths of despair, or in a state to commit any kind of excess! Say, that I talked of emigrating to America with Hildegarde;—tell him whatever you like, you dear little mediatrix! if you can only obtain his consent."

"Suppose I succeed with papa, and mamma remains inexorable?"

"Oh, leave me to manage my mother; I have no fear of serious opposition from her."

"There I fear you are quite mistaken," said Agnes; "but," she added, gaily, "let us hope the best."

"Yes; and let us now take a walk, and you shall hear all my plans for the future."

As they sauntered away together, Hamilton heard Zedwitz say, "I shall, of course, quit the army. My father will, probably, give me Castle Wolfstein, as he dislikes the mountains as much as I like them. We shall be near Hohenfels and the Zs, which will be agreeable. As a married man, the father of a family, and all that sort of thing, I don't know any people I should like so much for neighbours."

At a very early hour in the morning they all assembled to drink coffee. Mr. Rosenberg left at

the same time for Munich. Hamilton, concluding that he was satisfied with his wife's arrangement respecting him, as he shook his hand warmly at parting, and hoped to see him again in the course of the ensuing week. Madame Rosenberg gave various parting directions and commissions which Hamilton did not quite understand; neither did Mr. Rosenberg, he suspected, though he listened to his wife's orders with a patience which made it evident that he resembled Job in more respects than in having daughters, than whom "no women in all the land were found so fair."

The *char-à-banc* which they were so fortunate as to obtain in Traunstein, had five seats, and accommodated the whole party.

At the first respectably steep hill, both young men sprang out of the carriage, and when it halted to take them up again, Hamilton had no difficulty in ceding his place beside Hildegarde to Zedwitz, who looked the personification of gratitude; and well he might, for poor Hamilton had got a most riotous companion, and was so placed that he could scarcely avoid overhearing the whispered plans of future happiness which were made, revised, and corrected behind him; while before, he could observe the tactics of Zedwitz, who, with

no inconsiderable skill, was reconnoitring the ground previous to the grand attack which he was meditating.

The afternoon was far advanced before they reached the peasant's house, where the coachman and his horses were to pass the night, while they pursued their way on foot. The ascent was steeper and longer, than they had expected, and the heat intense. Hildegarde, Crescenz, and the two boys proved excellent pedestrians; Major Stultz toiled wearily after them — his efforts to appear vigorous deserved more success — but alas! after having wiped the drops of perspiration from his crimson face at least twenty times, and even removed his stiff black stock, in order to breathe more freely, — he sank exhausted on a fragment of rock, declaring that since his Russian campaign of 1812 he had never been able to recover the right use of his feet. Madame Rosenberg looked for a moment undecided what she should do; she wished to be civil, and offered, after some hesitation, to remain with him until he had rested, but on his declining, she said at once that she would go on before and prepare the supper. Poor man! he looked wistfully towards Crescenz. Madame Rosenberg understood him, but shook her head disapprov-

ingly, said she would leave him one of the guides, and begged he would not hurry himself in the least. Crescenz, who had been amusing herself with her two brothers, gathering flowers and picking wild raspberries, now turned to Hamilton, and giving him a handful of the latter, told him she would show him where to get more. The invitation was irresistible, and after telling her mother that they intended to overtake Hildegarde, who was still in sight, they hurried off together.

The conversation was at first desultory, interrupted by the scrambling through the bushes, and mutually offering the largest raspberries; by degrees, however, the fragrant fruit was neglected, and the flowers—even the beautiful pyrolas and sweet-scented cyclamen, gathered for and given to her by Major Stultz—were thoughtlessly picked to pieces and thrown away, while she listened to Hamilton's remarks or answered his numerous questions. She spoke without reserve of her mode of life at school; attached a girlish importance to her former companions' opinions and most trifling acts; complained of not having been allowed to speak during school-hours, and of being obliged to run and jump about at recreation time, when she would rather have sat in a corner

to talk to her friend Lina ; of having to listen to reading when at dinner ; but most of all, of having had all her long hair cut off the day of her entrance.

“ I was quite inconsolable about it,” she said, laughing, “ and cried for several days, but Hildegarde did not care in the least ; perhaps,” she added, “ because she was a-year older.”

Hamilton thought there might be another reason — the absence of personal vanity — but of course he did not say so. They had been ten years at school without ever having been allowed to spend a day at home.

“ So,” she continued, “ we knew nothing at all of my stepmother, and very little of papa, though he used to come and see us often and talk to Mademoiselle Hortense about us. At the examinations they generally both came, and mamma used to bring us an iced tart ; but Hildegarde would rather she had stayed away, as she was ashamed of her.”

“ And why was she ashamed of her ? ”

“ Oh, because all the other girls had such nice mothers and aunts, and Hildegarde thinks mamma so very vulgar.”

“ She seems, however, a good kind of person.”

"Oh, I dare say — but Hildegarde does not like good kind of persons."

"Indeed! Pray what kind of persons does she like, then?"

"I don't know whether she would like me to tell you or not."

"And I don't think you are obliged to ask her?"

"That is true; and, besides, it is no harm to like counts and barons better than other people!"

"Not at all. You rather said that you had a fancy of the same kind yourself, a few days ago."

"Yes — I confess I should like to be a von, or a baroness, or a countess — but still there is a difference, for *I* am afraid of fine people, and Hildegarde likes them; I saw her getting books from the Baroness Z., and speaking to those proud Zedwitzs the other day."

"You think it, then, probable, that she rather likes the attentions of Count Zedwitz?"

"I — don't — know. Hildegarde never speaks about such things when they concern herself, though she expects me to tell her every thing! I saw that old Countess Zedwitz talking to her in the garden yesterday — the Countess looked very red, and kept nodding her head continually,

and Hildegarde was very pale and haughty. I asked her what they had been speaking about, but she did not choose to tell me. I dare say it was something disagreeable."

"That is not impossible," said Hamilton, musingly; "in fact, rather probable— So, you don't know whether or not your sister likes Zed-witz?"

"No. She only observed once, when we were speaking of beauty, that she did not think it necessary for a man to be handsome."

"That was rather applicable to him; but he is so devoted that I should imagine him irresistible."

"I don't think that is the way to please Hildegarde."

"I should have thought devotion must have been pleasing to every woman."

"But Hildegarde has such odd ideas! I remember hearing her say to Mademoiselle Hortense, just before we left school, that she rather thought she should like a man of whom she could be afraid!"

"Strange girl!" said Hamilton.

"Strange girl, indeed!" repeated Crescenz; "and others think so differently! I should not like to be afraid of any one I loved, and that is

one of the reasons why I think that only people of nearly the same age should marry ! ”

Hamilton turned quickly to his companion, whose deep blush gave a special meaning to her last observation.

Hildegarde, Zedwitz, and Fritz, were far before them. Madame Rosenberg, with Gustle, and two guides loaded with provisions, equally far behind. They became sentimental, often looked back to admire the view which every moment increased in beauty and extent. She wished to be the inhabitant of one of the peaceful pretty peasant's houses which were scattered in the valley beneath them. Hamilton, of course, wished to bear her company. She sighed and murmured something about his understanding her, but fearing that Major Stultz never would. Hamilton declared with unusual warmth, that it was dreadful to think of such a marriage ! Such a sacrifice ! And he was sincere, too, for the moment, for he thought of the Major as he had last seen him, while he looked on the blooming youthful face before him ; and never had Crescenz looked so pretty ! A few common-place expressions of admiration were received with such evident pleasure, that Hamilton found the temptation more than he could withstand, and from ad-

miration glided almost imperceptibly into a most absurd, but rather indefinite, declaration of love. The words, however, had scarcely passed his lips before he became conscious of his folly. His dismay is not to be described when Crescenz, covered with blushes, confessed that she had loved him from the commencement of their acquaintance, and added, that she was willing for his sake, to brave both her father and mother's anger by dismissing Major Stultz !

Hamilton was perfectly thunderstruck, and for some moments quite incapable of uttering a syllable; as soon, however, as he could collect his thoughts, he began in a constrained voice, and with a manner as agitated as her own, to explain that he was a younger son, totally dependent on his father, and that he could not by any possible chance think of marrying for at least ten or twelve years.

Crescenz looked at him for a moment reproachfully, and then covering her face with her hands, burst into tears.

Hamilton never had been so angry with himself as at that moment; his fault was, indeed, unpardonable, and he felt that Crescenz was right when she pushed him from her, and refused to

listen to his excuses. The fact was, he had never thought she cared more for him than for any other person willing to pay her attention; and she had appeared so perfectly happy the day before—nay, that very day, that he had naturally imagined her now quite satisfied with her future prospects, and had expected her to understand what he had said more as a tribute to her youth and beauty, than as a serious proposal, the more so, as he had not made the most distant allusion to marriage in all that he had said. He now walked sorrowfully after the weeping girl, whose secret he had learned by such unwarrantable thoughtlessness. It was in vain he tried to exculpate himself, by thinking she was an arrant flirt, and would soon forget him: he began seriously to doubt her being one; every thing in her manner that had led to that conclusion could now be interpreted otherwise; her receiving Major Stultz's presents, and her apparent contentment, might have been affected to provoke his jealousy: her sister's words in the cloisters confirmed this idea. He did not give her credit for sufficient intellect to feel annoyed at having "told her love," but even that consolation was denied him; for on distantly hinting that it was unnecessary any person should ever be made

acquainted with their late conversation, she wrung her hands, and exclaimed bitterly,—

“ Oh, how could I be such a fool as to betray myself so !”

They walked on long in silence ; but Crescenz was too good and gentle to be inexorable, and before the end of their walk he had obtained pardon and a promise of secrecy—the latter without difficulty, as she innocently confessed she was equally afraid of her mother’s anger and her sister’s contempt.

They reached the alp both totally out of spirits. Crescenz’ melancholy face was a sort of reproach from which Hamilton would gladly have escaped ; and he now heartily repented his having made an engagement with Madame Rosenberg. Until Crescenz’ marriage had taken place he saw no chance of peace of mind or enjoyment of any kind, and many were the vows he internally made to be more circumspect in future.

“ Come, Hamilton, you must look at the sunset,” cried Zedwitz, seizing his arm and leading him away. He was in oppressively high spirits, and talked on without waiting for an answer, or even perceiving that his companion paid no sort of attention to what he said. They stood on the

top of the alp ; behind, and on each side of them, forming a sort of crescent, were mountains of every possible form, from the gigantic rocky peaks on which the snow lay, to the richly wooded mountain and green alp ; with mountains, valleys, forests, rivers, lakes, towns, villages, in view ; more than it was possible for the eye at once to enclose or the mind to comprehend.

Hildegarde and Crescenz joined them as the evening prayer bell tolled. At Seon this bell had generally been tolled while they had been at supper. The clatter of knives and forks and tongues had instantly ceased, and an awful stillness had taken place, which had not been broken by word or movement, until the last sound of the bell had died away ; when, as if a spell had been broken, each person had wished their neighbour a good evening, and renewed, with increased vigour, the interrupted occupation. It had always struck Hamilton, as something very Mahometan-like, this praying to the sound of a bell, especially when it occurred in the midst of conversation, where the difficulty of commanding the thoughts must be ten-fold increased. Not so did it appear to him this evening : as village after village, and every church spire far and near sent their tranquil

chimes over the plain—a feeling of enthusiastic devotion was irrepressible; it seemed as if the solemn tones, on reaching the mountains, paused to vibrate in the air while they collected the prayers which they were about to bear to heaven on a thousand echoes. Zedwitz stood with his head uncovered and arms folded; Crescenz clasped her hands and moved her lips in prayer. Hildgarde's eyes were fixed so steadfastly on the golden clouds above her, that it was impossible not to think that at the moment she wished for the "wings of a dove to flee away and be at rest:" a messenger from the *châlet* waited respectfully for the last sound to die away in the distance before he summoned them to supper. The interruption was unwelcome to them all; but before they descended it was agreed that they should return again with the guides and make a bonfire. They found Madame Rosenberg, as usual, bustling about, ordering and directing everybody and everything, Fritz and Gustle stealing cake and sugar; and Major Stultz, who seemed to have but lately arrived, was sitting in his shirt-sleeves wistfully eyeing a glass of beer which he was afraid to drink in his then state of heat, while to hurry the operation of cooling, he was fanning himself with a

red and yellow pocket-handkerchief! Hamilton glanced towards Crescenz, but as their eyes met, he regretted that he had done so, and determined that nothing should induce him to look either at her or Major Stultz for a long time again. Something, however, he must seek to interest him, and he turned towards Hildegard: a more dangerous study he could scarcely have found. She was seated on the grass, outside the door of the wooden pavilion, beside her brothers, and for the first time since he had known her, seemed occupied with them. There was a quiet avoidance of Zedwitz on her part, which in contrast to the coquetry of her sister, particularly interested Hamilton. This scarcely perceptible avoidance was however unnoticed. Zedwitz was too completely wrapt up in admiration, and had eyes and ears for her alone. Weariness prolonged the meal, and twilight was deepening into night before they thought of moving. Madame Rosenberg and Major Stultz said at length, that it was time to retire to rest; the others remembered that they intended to make a fire on the top of the hill, and insisted on putting their plan into execution. Major Stultz, afraid to oppose, followed Crescenz: the guides were put in requisition, and in a short

time every one was collecting wood and piling it in a heap.

The fire burned brightly, and coloured picturesquely the different members of the party, as they lay dispersed around, some seated on the stumps of trees, others extended on the grass—all weary, yet all interested in their novel situation. Hamilton, apart from the others, looked on without mixing in the careless conversation which was kept up—it was to him like a scene in a play; he understood the double plot and had decided on making Hildegarde the heroine; but was Zedwitz the hero who, at the end, was to obtain her fair hand? No—unaccountably enough, he found that to suit his plan the old Count must be perfectly obdurate. Zedwitz was to give up the affair as hopeless; and Hildegarde! Hildegarde was to—to—remain at home;—yes—that would do—an inmate still of her father's house; and now, unconsciously, Hamilton, from supposing himself a spectator, became, in thought, an actor. He was also in that house.—Hildegarde was to become insensibly aware of his good qualities and good looks—was, in fact, to become desperately in love with him! he, all the while, stoically indifferent. A feeling of honour was to make him

explain to her, in a most interesting scene, the impossibility of a . . . she . . . Crescenz . . . Zedwitz . . . Here the party round the fire broke up. The boys had fallen asleep and were now being carried by the guides to the *châlet*. Madame Rosenberg, Hildegarde, and Crescenz, followed; Major Stultz remained to finish his pipe, and the two young men commenced fresh cigars; they did not exchange a word until their companion had left them, when Zedwitz pitching his cigar into the still glowing embers, asked abruptly,—

“Do you know where you are to sleep to-night?”

“Not I,” answered Hamilton; “but I do not expect the accommodation to be even tolerable.”

“We are to sleep together in a hay-loft.”

“I have done that before, and for one night it does not signify; but Major Stultz?”

“Sleeps also in the hay-loft.”

“And the boys?”

“In the hay-loft.”

“And the ladies?”

“In the hay-loft.”

“Nonsense, Zedwitz—you are joking.”

“I am perfectly serious; there is but one bed in the house, and it is so little inviting that no one has courage to make use of it. We are all

to sleep together in the hay-loft. I rather enjoy the idea. Shall we go?"

"By all means."

This, thought Hamilton, as they descended the hill together, is something quite out of the common course of things. I wonder what sort of a loft it is?

The only light in the house proceeded from the kitchen fire which still burnt on the high open hearth: beside it were seated one of the guides and a peasant girl, who had come from one of the houses in the valley, and so wrapt up were they in their evidently confidential discourse, that they were unconscious of the presence of strangers until Zedwitz laughingly asked the way to the hay-loft.

"This way, if you please," said the man, looking a little embarrassed, "Take care you don't stumble, it is so dark."

He was followed closely by Hamilton, and they both quietly and cautiously mounted the somewhat rickety ladder which led to the loft, and entered it by a trap-door. It was very full of hay, and by the light which was sparingly admitted through the solitary gable window, they could see several figures stretched in different positions around them, but they could not tell whether or not they were sleepers. Major Stultz was alone

communicative on that point—he lay with his mouth wide open, and was snoring profoundly.

“I suppose, Hamilton, we ought to take the places near the entrance?” whispered Zedwitz.

“I cannot bear a draught,” replied the other, moving towards the end of the loft, where Madame Rosenberg and the children were lying. At his approach, two figures began slowly to roll away from him—a stifled laugh and an angry hush, betrayed at once the sisters; and no sooner had he and Zedwitz chosen their places, than they perceived a partition wall of hay was being built in their neighbourhood. Soon convinced that Madame Rosenberg and the children slept, Hamilton felt greatly inclined to commence a conversation with the two girls; but which of them should he address? from Hildegard he had little hope of an answer—from Crescenz he felt that he deserved none. It was in vain he urged Zedwitz to begin, telling him that he could not sleep; that the hay was too hot, and the loft too cold, and too uncomfortable; that he could not remain quiet, &c., &c., &c., his companion moved away from him, saying, in a low voice, that he knew Hildegard would not speak, and that he had nothing to say to her sister. In a few minutes he too was

fast asleep, leaving Hamilton to compose himself as he best could. After having tried all possible positions, he at length resigned himself to his fate, and determined not to move again.

After half-an-hour's silence, Hildegarde and her sister began to whisper to each other.

"Is not that man's snoring dreadful, Hildegarde? Confess he looked odious this evening at supper, sitting in his shirt-sleeves like a shoemaker or tailor?"

"You see him to great disadvantage in a party of this kind, dear; at home I am sure he is quite different—and as to his snoring, you know even papa snores sometimes."

"I know you are determined not to see anything that does not place him in an advantageous light, and I only regret you did not discover his perfections sooner—it would have saved me a world of misery!"

To this speech no answer was made, and a long pause ensued.

"Hildegarde, are you angry?" at length asked Crescenz, timidly.

"No; I am only tired of always hearing the same thing."

"Forgive me, dearest, and I promise you have

heard it for the last time; but now I expect that you will give me an answer to a plain question. You cannot pretend any longer to be blind to Count Zedwitz' attentions—what answer do you intend to" . . .

The whisperers had hitherto spoken inaudibly, but this question, from a change of position in the speaker, distinctly reached Hamilton's ears. Great was his curiosity to know the answer, but without a moment's delay he moved and coughed. Not a sound more was heard, not a whisper even attempted during the whole two long hours that he still lay awake and motionless, wishing for morning.

And when the morning came, Hamilton slept soundly; he saw not the sisters as they passed his couch on tiptoe; he heard not the proposal of Fritz to cover him with hay, or of Gustle to tickle him, or the admonitions of Madame Rosenberg, and her threats of leaving them always at home in future should they dare now to make a noise. When he awoke he found himself the sole occupant of the loft, and had at first some difficulty in recollecting how he had got there. It was still very early, and in the hope of seeing the sun rise from the top of the alp, he hurried out into the

fresh morning air. The sun was, however, beyond the horizon, and bright daybeams already tinted the mountain tops. A few minutes brought him to the spot where they had all sat round the fire the preceding evening; the charred wood marked the spot, and had Hamilton found there the society he expected, he would probably have taken time to have once more admired the prospect which had so delighted him a few hours before, and which was now even more beautiful in the distinctness of early morning, but he was a gregarious animal, and finding himself unexpectedly alone, a hasty glance of admiration was all now bestowed on the diversified plain which lay beneath him, and then, with hasty steps, he retraced his way to the *chalét*. One of the guides met him at the door and informed him that Madame Rosenberg and the others had been gone some time, and were to dress and breakfast at the farm-house where they had left the carriage. A short time sufficed to enable him to overtake the last detachment, consisting of Madame Rosenberg, Crescenz, and Major Stultz, and they pursued their way leisurely together. Hildegarde had been sent on before to order breakfast, and on finding that Zedwitz intended to accompany her, had taken

her two brothers. On reaching the farm-house, they found her busily occupied at a table placed under the trees, preparing bread and mil for the children—Zedwitz officiously assisting her.

“What ! are you already dressed for Salzburg, Hildegarde ? ” cried Madame Rosenberg. “You must have walked very quickly; I hope the boys are not overheated ! ” and she carefully placed her hand on their foreheads to ascertain the fact.

“Oh, mamma,” cried Fritz, boastingly, “we could have walked much faster ! We could have been down the mountain in half the time ! It was Zedwitz who was tired ; he wanted us twice to rest on the way.”

“It would have been better than running the risk of giving the children colds,” observed Madame Rosenberg, glancing towards Hildegarde.

“Oh, we did not wish to rest, or Hildegarde either, though Zedwitz said he had ever so much to say to her.”

“Indeed ! ” cried his mother, looking inquisitively from one to the other ; “indeed ! ” She turned to Hamilton who stood beside her, and whispered, “I shall not be five minutes dressing ; you will greatly oblige me by remaining here until I return.”

Hamilton made no answer; waited, however, only until she was fairly out of sight, and then, nodding good humouredly to Zedwitz, walked into the house. Madame Rosenberg's ideas of five minutes for dressing were not very defined. She was one of those persons who, at home the most incorrigible of slatterns, when they go out make it a point to be almost overdressed. Hamilton, Crescenz, and Major Stultz had long been waiting for her before she appeared, and to begin breakfast without her would have been an unpardonable offence. The delays seemed to have no end, for as she approached the table, Zedwitz, who had been standing apart, went towards her and requested to speak a few words to her alone. Major Stultz proposed waiting until after breakfast, but Zedwitz persisted in his request with a seriousness which scarcely admitted of a refusal, and the audience was accordingly granted. Hamilton wished to look at Hildegarde, but he refrained: had he done so his conjectures might have taken another turn, for surely had Hildegarde imagined herself the subject of conversation, she could not have leaned so calmly on her elbow without exhibiting the slightest particle of emotion! Crescenz did not seem to think her

sister's imperturbability a conclusive argument—her eyes anxiously followed her stepmother's form, and nothing but the shortness of the conference and ocular demonstration that they were simply arranging accounts, could have convinced her that she had been mistaken in her supposition that Zedwitz was formally asking permission to pay his addresses to her sister. She had dressed in a room at the front of the house, and from the window had seen them standing at the spring together. Zedwitz had spoken long and eagerly, and Hildegarde had apparently listened very calmly, but with evident interest to what he had said. Her answer was short and decided, and she had left him abruptly to interfere between her brothers, who were flinging the remains of their bread and milk at each other. It had cost both sisters considerable trouble to purify their garments before their mother saw them.

A small carriage was now drawn up to the front of the house, and a youthful peasant led out a young, strong-built grey horse, and began to arrange the harness. Zedwitz advanced quietly towards the party, and surprised them not a little by saying that he was about to take leave of them—he did not feel well, and would return to Seon.

"You are ill!" cried Hamilton, starting up from the bench where he had been lazily reclining; "You are ill, and think of returning alone! — that must not be allowed. I am quite ready to accompany you."

"It is not necessary," replied Zedwitz, laying his hand heavily on his arm, while he continued to take leave of the others, and hoped their tour might prove in every respect agreeable. "The fact is," he said, drawing Hamilton towards the little carriage, which it appeared had been got ready for him; "the fact is, I am ill in mind but not in body. Hildegard has refused my suit so decidedly that I dare not renew it. The best thing I can now do is to return to Seon, and perhaps I may arrive in time to prevent my sister from speaking to my father. My rash haste may have injured my cause. How could I expect her to get accustomed to my ugliness and to care for me in so short a time?"

"I think," said Hamilton, "it is more than probable that her fear of the opposition of your family may have caused her refusal."

"Not a bit of it; she never referred to my family, nor, indeed, had I time to mention them. She said she liked me very well as an acquaint-

ance, but nothing more ; she was sorry if her manner had led me to think otherwise. Now I was obliged, in justice, to exonerate her from even a shadow of coquetry, which in this case was disagreeable, as it was tantamount to charging myself with egregious vanity : but the most annoying and disheartening thing in the whole business was her coolness and decision of manner ; it led me at once to form the conclusion that I was not the first person who had spoken to her on the same subject. Do you think it possible that her affections are already engaged ? ”

“ I neither think it possible, nor even probable. Why, she has not left school more than two months.”

“ Her sister left school at the same time, is a year younger, and yet has contrived to fall in love with you, and to promise to marry another in exactly half the time,” said Zedwitz, bitterly.

“ Pray do not imagine anything of that kind,” said Hamilton, colouring deeply ; “ she is merely one of those soft yielding sort of beings, who with a more than sufficiency of vanity and coquetry in their nature, are ready to fancy themselves and others in love without rightly knowing what the feeling is. This Hildegarde is worth a hundred

such. I like her decision of character, and she is certainly very handsome."

"Handsome! she is perfectly beautiful!" cried Zedwitz; "and I am convinced she is as amiable as beautiful!"

"If you are convinced of *that*, you are very wrong to give her up as you are doing. Try what time and perseverance will do."

"My dear Hamilton, if you had spoken to her, if you had even seen her when I pleaded my cause, you would think differently. When we meet again it will be as common acquaintances. But every moment is precious, and I must now be off. I shall take post-horses at the next town, and hope to reach Seon in the afternoon. I hope most sincerely that my sister has had no opportunity of speaking to my father. I shall scarcely be at Seon when you return; but you know my address in Munich, and I shall expect to see you directly you arrive there. Adieu!"

He sprung into the carriage, bowed to the occupants of the breakfast-table and drove off, while Hamilton, leaning against the door of the house, looked after him. "So," he thought, "this is the man I fancied full of German romance and enthusiasm! Why, my brother John could not have

resigned himself to his fate more easily ; but then he would have made a parade of his indifference. Englishmen are fond of doing so, while Germans, I suspect, are disposed to pretend to more feeling than they possess. Yet, after all, what could he have done ? Shoot himself, like Werter ? Absurd ! What should I have done ? I have not the most remote idea ; but, then, I have never got beyond temporary admiration for any one. Very odd, too. Jack says he was in love before he was twelve years old. Precocious fellow ! Zedwitz was right the other day when he said that my feelings and ideas were not those of a man of my time of life. However, I flatter myself that what I have lost in what he calls freshness of feeling, I have gained in other respects, and can now, in spite of my youth, calmly contemplate what is going on about me, while Zedwitz, so many years my senior, has been acting with all the rash impetuosity of a boy."

In all the proud consciousness of premature knowledge of the world, Hamilton seated himself at the breakfast-table, and allowed Madame Rosenberg to pour out his coffee, and wonder without interruption what could be the matter with the Count, who, she insisted, had been quite well all

the morning. His eyes glanced mischievously towards Hildegarde, but she apparently did not observe it. Madame Rosenberg now began deliberately to pack up the remaining sugar in her reticule. Half-an-hour later they were seated in the *char-à-banc* on their way to Salzburg. Zedwitz' absence was greatly felt, for he was cheerful and good-natured. Hamilton had determined not even to look at Crescenz, while Hildegarde appeared to have formed the same resolution with regard to him. A sort of discontent seemed to pervade the whole party for some time, but by degrees it yielded to the beauty of the scenery. Madame Rosenberg having once spent some months at Salzburg, was now able to name each mountain as it appeared in the foreground, or made itself remarkable by its form in the distance. But the Untersberg interested her two sons more than anything else. This mountain, which here rises abruptly out of the Walser fields, and is of enormous extent, was, she told them, the prison and tomb of Frederick Barbarossa, or, as the peasants said, of Charlemagne. The questions and answers on this fruitful subject lasted until they reached Salzburg.

CHAPTER IX.

SALZBURG.

WHILE waiting for dinner at the hotel, Hamilton amused himself turning over the leaves of the "Strangers' book," and saw among the latest arrivals the name of an uncle he had wished much to meet when he had been last in Salzburg; he would then have been glad to have had an opportunity of presenting some respectable relations to Baron Z——, after the odd manner in which their acquaintance had commenced: he now wished to see his relations from more natural motives, without either the wish or intention of making them acquainted with his travelling companions. There is something peculiarly agreeable in hearing the voices of one's countrymen speaking one's own language in a foreign country; even if they be merely common acquaintances they rise at once to the rank of friends; if friends, to relations—if relations, we are astonished at the excess of our

affection for them ! Something of this kind Hamilton experienced as he heard his uncle saying, " A young gentleman inquiring for me ! What is his name ? " In a moment he had quitted the table and was in the lobby before the question could be answered. The surprise, perhaps, heightened the pleasure felt by his two young and pretty cousins, and their reception of him was so unreservedly affectionate, that as they came near the door of the dining-room, Hildegard and Crescenz exchanged glances, and then fixed their eyes on them with a slight expression of curiosity.

" What a pity you did not arrive earlier, Alfred ; we have spent the whole morning sight-seeing, and now the horses are being put-to, and we have scarcely ten minutes to ask each other the thousand questions which— But come to our rooms—we cannot possibly talk before these people."

" They would not understand us," said Hamilton, following them up the stairs, by no means displeased at the arrangement.

Madame Rosenberg soon became impatient at the duration of his absence, and leaving word with the waiter that Mr. Hamilton might follow them to St. Peter's cellar, she proposed herself as guide, and they set out on their excursion.

Hamilton accompanied his uncle and cousins to their very handsome travelling-carriage, and as he bade them adieu for the twentieth time, his uncle called out, "God bless you, Alfred ! I shall tell your father and uncle Ralph that I found you greatly improved. If they had kept you in London, your brother John would have spoiled you, and made you just as good-for-nothing as he is himself. Nothing like travelling for enlarging the ideas. Good bye !"

The waiter informed Hamilton that the ladies were gone to St. Peter's cellar.

"Major Stultz, you mean ?" said Hamilton.

"No, sir—the ladies—perhaps they have gone to look at the excavation in the rock. The cellar is in the mountain, and is worth seeing."

The monks of St. Peter are the actual proprietors of this cellar, which adjoins, and in fact is still a part of the monastery : it is the wine from their Hungarian vineyards which is there sold, and the entrance to the drinking rooms is from the principal quadrangle. Arrived there, Hamilton immediately accosted a man who in a jacket and apron, and with a green velvet cap on his head, stood before the entrance of the excavation.

"Ladies ! Oh, ha—yes—they are within," he

answered, leading the way through a small dark passage to two low rooms filled with the fumes of tobacco. Hamilton entered, and found his travelling companions actually seated at a table drinking wine, in a room crowded with Hungarian officers, who seemed equally surprised and amused at the unusual appearance of such an addition to their society. Madame Rosenberg was quietly sipping her wine, and talking earnestly to Major Stultz near a window, quite unconscious of the sensation which she and her party had created, and the by no means whispered exclamations of admiration which were echoed on all sides, and which produced most opposite effects on the objects of them. Crescenz looked half frightened, half pleased, and blushed incessantly. Hildegard's countenance denoted annoyance bordering on anger as she sat biting her under lip, while every trace of colour had forsaken her face. Hamilton felt extremely irritated, and looked round the room with a portentous frown to see if any *one* had been more forward than the others; but in vain,—broad, sallow, good-humoured, faces and small sparkling black eyes met his angry glance wherever he turned; and as the conversation was now principally carried on in their native language,

he could only surmise, but no longer be certain of, the subject of discourse. The eyes of all were still turned on the two sisters; and Hamilton, after a moment's hesitation, proposed escorting them to the Maximus chapel, which was near, and where they could wait for their mother. Hildegarde started up without asking the permission, which, however, was accorded without difficulty; and the two boys, to their infinite annoyance, were also ordered off. On perceiving their mother engaged in confidential conversation with Major Stultz, they had freely helped themselves to wine, and were now in outrageous spirits. On entering the St. Peter's churchyard, they commenced springing over the graves in a most irreverent manner, declaring they had never before seen so jolly a churchyard! Crescenz looked infinitely shocked, entreated they would not make so much noise; and, finding her remonstrances useless, she turned towards the St. Margaret's chapel, a small building in the middle of the burying ground, and leaning against the iron railing which formed at once its door and gable-end, she folded her hands reverently and prayed. The custom in Roman Catholic countries of leaving the church doors constantly open, most certainly conduces to promote

piety. Many a giddy girl, whose thoughts have wandered as unrestrained as her glances down the crowded aisle, has sought the same spot afterwards in solitude to offer up supplications and thanksgivings as fervent perhaps as ever were breathed. Much as has been said of the imposing ritual of the Church of Rome,—of the almost irresistible effect of high mass when properly celebrated,—it is nothing in comparison to the solemn silence of a week-day afternoon, when the stillness around makes the solitary foot-fall echo, and those who come to pray can bend the knee and clasp the hand without exciting the inquisitive gaze of a less piously disposed neighbour.

Hamilton had gone in search of the person who had the keys of the Maximus chapel: on his return he found Hildegard standing thoughtfully opposite a newly-made tomb on which a placard was placed with the words:—"This Tomb is to be sold."

"I should like extremely to know your thoughts," he said, quietly, placing himself beside her.

"Should you? They would scarcely repay you for the trouble of listening."

"I am quite willing to make the trial."

"But I am much too lazy to attempt collect-

ing all the scattered thoughts of the last ten minutes."

"The very last I can guess, perhaps," said Hamilton; "your eyes were fixed on that placard, and you thought . . .

"Well, what?"

"Where are now the future occupiers of that tomb? Am I not right?"

"Quite right. Wherever they are, and whoever they may be, they certainly have no wish to enter here: the buyers of *tombs* are seldom disposed to enter into actual possession. But where is this Maximus chapel? You said it was in the mountain, and I see nothing in the least like an entrance, although there are three windows and a wall up there."

"The windows were formerly mere holes made in the rock, and ought never to have been glazed—through the largest of them fifty monks, who had taken refuge with Maximus, were thrown headlong down the mountain by the barbarians who took possession of Salzburg in the fifth century."

"And Maximus?"

"He was hung."

"That was a pity—I dare say he would have preferred being thrown over the precipice?"

"Do you think so? As it all came to the same in the end, I should imagine it must rather have been a matter of indifference to him."

"But I do not," cried Hildegarde, stopping suddenly; "I think the manner in which one is put to death of great importance: I am sure you would prefer being beheaded to being hung?"

"The choice would be distressing; but I believe you are right; I should certainly choose being beheaded as the more gentlemanlike death of the two, though I remember reading in some book the horrible hypothesis—that the eye could see, the ear hear, and the brain think, for some moments after the head had been severed from the body!"

The guide jingled his keys. He probably thought the discussion of such subjects might be deferred until he had received his *Trinkgeld*, and he now threw open the gate and motioned to them to ascend. The tolerably numerous steps leading to the former abode and chapel of the anchorite were hewn in the mountain, the passage somewhat dark, and Hildegarde having declined any assistance, Hamilton, notwithstanding all his good resolutions to avoid Crescenz in future, turned towards her, was greeted with a soft

smile, and his arm accepted as willingly as it was offered. He now took upon himself the office of guide, exhibited the chapel with its solitary Roman pillar, the sleeping room of Maximus, and the place from which his companions had been precipitated. He was obliged to hold Crescenz, while she childishly stretched as far as possible over the mountain side, all the while declaring that she could not stand on the brink of a precipice without feeling an almost irresistible inclination to throw herself down it. No sooner had her two brothers heard this, than they rushed forward and thoughtlessly pushed her with a violence that might have had most fatal consequences, had not Hamilton at the moment thrown his arms quite round her and drawn her back. Crescenz screamed violently, Fritz and Gustle laughed immoderately: Hildegard remonstrated angrily, and in the midst of the clamour, Madame Rosenberg and Major Stultz joined them. Crescenz blushed deeply, and with a voice trembling from agitation, related what had occurred, and complained bitterly of her brothers' rudeness. Madame Rosenberg scolded her for having looked down the precipice; Hildegard, for not having watched her brothers, and prevented such a scene in such a place; and con-

cluded by seizing both the boys by the shoulders and shaking them violently, while she declared that she had a great mind to send them back to the inn, and not let them see either the Dom church or the fountain. She turned to thank Hamilton for having taken charge of so riotous a party, but he had disappeared, annoyed at what had occurred, and internally vowing never to take charge of Crescenz or her brothers again.

Major Stultz had suddenly become jealous and out of temper—all the efforts of Madame Rosenberg to turn “the winter of his discontent,” to “glorious summer,” were vain; he followed her, half whistling with his hands clasped behind him, intending to look extremely unconcerned; while his heightened colour, as they overtook Hamilton, betrayed to all the cause of his annoyance. Crescenz seemed perfectly indifferent, or rather half-disposed to brave his anger; for as they stood by Haydn’s monument, in the Peter’s church, she placed herself beside Hamilton, and spoke to him in French. It is true the conversation was about the skull of Haydn, and the black marble urn which contained it; but Major Stultz could not be aware of this circumstance; and with increased anger he strode down the aisle, seeming disposed

to quit them, had not Hamilton, weary of these misunderstandings, and provoked by Crescenz's coquetry, said that he would meet them at the hotel in an hour: he was going to the cavalry stables to see the horses, which, of course, would not be interesting to them, and, without waiting for an answer, he walked away.

Hamilton's absence did not seem to have much improved the state of affairs, for on his return to the inn no one but Madame Rosenberg seemed disposed to be loquacious; and when they got into the *char-à-banc*, which was to take them to Berchtesgaden, Crescenz absolutely manœuvred to avoid Major Stultz; and on being ordered by her mother to sit beside him, pouted in the most significant manner. Madame Rosenberg chose this time to take charge of her two sons herself; she thought their vicinity might interrupt the reconciliation between Major Stultz and Crescenz, which she evidently wished to promote, but which seemed less likely than ever to take place, as Crescenz chose now to appear or to be excessively offended. This line of conduct had the effect of making poor Major Stultz imagine that he had been, perhaps, too hasty—unjust—uncivil—in short, he very soon accused himself of being a savage! and as these

thoughts passed through his brain, his manners and words softened ;—he became humble, and even entreated forgiveness for the unknown offence ; but all in vain . . . Crescenz scarcely answered him—in fact she had not heard him, for her whole attention was absorbed in the conversation of her sister and Hamilton, who were immediately before her,—she fancied that neither had disliked the arrangement which had placed them together : the latter, especially, seemed determined to amuse and be amused, and for more than an hour and a half the conversation never flagged. Madame Rosenberg occasionally joined in it, and Major Stultz also chimed in when he found all his efforts to obtain answers from Crescenz fruitless. They had nearly reached Berchtesgaden, and Hamilton had just begun to congratulate himself on having at length discovered the possibility of talking to Hildegarde without quarrelling, when Major Stultz abruptly asked him if he had been to see the Summer Riding-school.

“ Can you doubt it ? it is the prettiest thing of the kind I have ever seen—the *beau ideal* of an ancient theatre. That the tiers of seats for the spectators are hewn out of the mountain, enhances its grandeur, and makes one forget that it is only a

riding-school. What a place for a tournament ! or for Gladiators ; or what an arena for wild beasts ! ”

“ Exactly what we all said when we were there to-day,” exclaimed Hildegarde.

“ Yes,” said Crescenz, for the first time joining in the conversation ; “ we all said that, but Hildegarde and I thought of Schiller’s ballad of ‘ The Glove ; ’ didn’t we, Hildegarde ? ”

Hildegarde nodded.

“ It is odd enough, I thought of it too,” said Hamilton : “ the tiger attacked by the two leopards ; the lion rising to join in the combat — I saw it all in imagination — fancied myself the Knight Delorges, and looked round to see if no Cunigunde were there to throw her glove amidst the combatants.”

“ Did you think of any particular person as Cunigunde ? ” asked Crescenz, softly, and with a slight blush.

“ Perhaps I did,” replied Hamilton, laughing.

“ Oh, I should like so much to know who you thought of ! Should not you, Hildegarde ? ”

“ If Mr. Hamilton wish to tell — ” begun Hildegarde.

“ I prefer walking up the hill into the town,”

said Hamilton, springing out of the open side of the carriage.

"Let us all walk," cried Madame Rosenberg, desiring the coachman to stop; "my feet are quite cramped."

Hamilton had hoped to escape further questioning, but Crescenz commenced again as they walked along together.

"Your avoidance of my question has raised my curiosity, and you positively must tell me of whom you thought in the riding-school to-day.

"Pray, Crescenz," said Hildegarde, "do not force Mr. Hamilton to give an answer; it must be totally uninteresting to you—remember the number of acquaintances he must have in England whose names are unknown to us."

"If it had been any one in England, or any one unknown to us, he would have answered my question at once and without hesitation," replied Crescenz, with unusual decision of manner.

Hildegarde, struck with the reply, experienced herself a feeling of curiosity which greatly surprised her. She walked on in silence, and soon heard her sister continue, in a very low voice,—

"I am sure you did not think of *me*!"

"Certainly not," he replied, in the same tone;

“you are too kind and too gentle to place the life even of an enemy in such jeopardy.”

Crescenz seemed not quite to know whether she were satisfied or disappointed. She would have liked to have been his lady-love, would have wished to imagine that he would have picked up her glove at such imminent risk — yet his manner and words implied nothing flattering to the supposed Cunigunde; and although she did not quite understand his meaning, she knew that he had said that she was kind and gentle, and she felt that she ought to be satisfied. Not so Hildegard — she understood well the vanity and callousness of the character sketched in a few words by Schiller — she fancied that Hamilton disliked her, and an irresistible impulse made her turn to him, and say abruptly, “You thought of *me*!”

The blood mounted to his temples and seemed to take refuge in his hair, as he returned Hildegard’s glance, yet hesitated in answering—but he could not deny it, and replied, after a moment’s consideration, “Thoughts are not subject to control; you have no right to make me answerable for them.”

“I have no intention of doing so,” she replied; “I care too little about you to give myself the

trouble of convincing you that you do not understand my character in the least. On the contrary, I confess that were you disposed to play the part of the knight, perhaps I might throw down my glove and be glad to get rid of you on any terms."

"Even were I to be torn to pieces in your presence by the wild beasts? I did not think you were so cruel!" said Hamilton, amused at her irritated manner.

"The danger for you would not be very great. You are the last person in the world to do any thing of that kind."

"Do you doubt my personal courage?"

"No; but I doubt your possessing knightly feelings."

"I am, it is true, no Don Quixote, no knight of the sorrowful countenance—"

"No, indeed, you much more deserve the name of the knight of the scornful countenance—that is, if one could fancy you a knight at all."

"I have no doubt, mademoiselle, that were your fancy to form one he would in no respect resemble me; however, we need not quarrel on the supposition of what we should have done had we been born a few hundred years sooner; it is evident

you would not have chosen me for your knight—nor I—perhaps—you, for my lady-love.”

“Oh, dear!” exclaimed Crescenz, “if I had thought that you two would have quarrelled, I would not have asked any questions, though I do not understand why Hildegarde is so offended at being thought like Cunigunde, who, I dare say, was the handsomest lady present.”

“Your sister is not satisfied with being merely handsome, she wishes to be thought amiable also, and seems disposed to force people to say so, whatever they may think to the contrary.”

Hildegarde walked haughtily towards her step-mother, and reached her just in time to hear the concluding words of what appeared to be Major Stultz’ remonstrances.

“His being an Englishman does not in my opinion alter the case, or make him a less dangerous companion for your daughters. I do not presume to dictate. I merely offer advice, which you do not seem disposed to take; and nothing now remains for me but to beg of you to hurry as much as possible the preparations for Crescenz’ marriage. A few scenes such as we have had to-day would soon cure me of all fancy for her. You told me she was good-tempered, and I have

found her so sullen since we left Salzburg, that it was impossible to obtain a word from her."

"My dear Major, you may depend upon my reprimanding her severely for such conduct. You shall see—"

"By no means, madame—I don't wish her to be reprimanded. I shall speak to her myself, and tell her that I have a comfortable home to offer her; that I am disposed to be an indulgent husband, but that I am too old to play lover, and altogether decline entering into competition with such a rival as that tall Englishman, who, however, I can also tell her, has no more idea of marriage than the man in the moon!"

"But, my dear Major, I really must beg of you not to mention the Englishman to her. It will only put an idea into her head which I am convinced has never entered it. You forget what a mere child she is—not yet sixteen!"

Major Stultz turned round suddenly to look at his betrothed; the moment was unpropitious for removing jealous doubts. She was walking alone with Hamilton, and speaking with an earnestness totally foreign to her character, while the expression of her upturned eye denoted anything but childishness.

"This will never do !" exclaimed Major Stultz, angrily.

"You wrong her most assuredly," cried Madame Rosenberg, with a sort of blind reliance on Crescenz' childishness which this time, however, did not deceive her: "You wrong her, and I will prove it by asking her what she is talking about. Crescenz, my love, we wish to know the subject of your discourse, it seems to be interesting."

Crescenz answered without hesitation, "I am defending Hildegarde ; Mr. Hamilton and she have quarrelled about the ballad of 'The Glove.' He says she was rude ; and I think he was rude ; for he said if he had been a knight he would not have chosen her for his lady-love. I do not think of being angry, and he did not choose me either," she added, glancing half-reproachfully.

On another occasion Madame Rosenberg would have inquired further, and given, perhaps, an edifying lecture on politeness and propriety of language ; she was now too well satisfied with Crescenz' answer to think of anything of the kind, and turning triumphantly to Major Stultz, she whispered, "You see I was right. I cannot answer for Hildegarde. Rosenberg says I do not

understand her; but Crescenz *is* a good girl—almost too good and docile. You can make whatever you please of her.”

They all walked together to the inn, and “The Glove ” seemed to be quite forgotten.

CHAPTER X.

THE RETURN TO MUNICH.

HAMILTON's journey to Munich proved more agreeable than the commencement had promised. Hildegard, the maid, Peppy, and Fritz were his companions: the others occupied the second carriage and chose to be together, as Fritz sapiently observed, in order to talk secrets about Cressy's wedding. Hildegard exhibited her dislike to Hamilton so artlessly that he could scarcely preserve a serious countenance, while he endeavoured to overcome it. The averted head—short, careless answers, and pertinacious discourse with brother Fritz, could not, however, long resist his efforts. He was possessed of no inconsiderable advantages, both of mind and manner, and of this he was, perhaps, but too well aware, sometimes unnecessarily undervaluing the intellect of others, while he indulged in a vein of satire most displeasing when it became evident. Hildegard had

noticed this in his intercourse with her sister, and was at first extremely guarded in her answers, but his manner was so unconstrained, his account of himself and his ideas so amusing and simple, that at length she also became communicative, and unconsciously displayed an extent of intellect for which Hamilton had not been prepared — her acquirements were considerable for a girl of her age, and she spoke with enthusiasm of the continuance of her studies when she returned to Munich. Her father had quite an excellent library of his own, which he had promised to let her use, and her mother intended to subscribe to a circulating library, on condition that none but French books should be sent for or read. On Hamilton's inquiring further, she said with a slight blush, that she was extremely fond of novels and poetry.

“Poetry!” he exclaimed, thrown off his guard; “poetry! I should have imagined that more suited to your sister's taste than yours.”

No sooner had the word “sister” passed his lips than he saw a sudden change in the expression of his companion's countenance; he had, in fact, awakened a train of unpleasant reflections, rendered more disagreeable by a feeling of self-reproach for previous forgetfulness. Hildegarde

retired from him as far as the limits of the carriage permitted, looking out of the window, without noticing his remark, and rendered all his attempts to renew the conversation abortive by entering into a disquisition with her brother on the impropriety of bringing snow-balls into the house in winter ! With a smile, which Hildegarde would perhaps have denominated a sneer, had she seen it, Hamilton leaned back in the carriage, and was soon occupied in mental speculations on the change which one word had been able to produce, although the cause was by no means difficult to surmise. They did not speak again until they entered the inn where they were to dine. Madame Rosenberg was his companion in the afternoon, and so effectually did she contrive to beguile the time with a history of herself and her family, that he was actually sorry when, at a late hour in the evening, their journey ended, and both carriages began somewhat tumultuously to pour forth their contents.

The apartments were on the third story, and on bounding up the stairs to them, Hamilton was received by Mr. Rosenberg with almost as much cordiality as his future son-in-law, who had followed more slowly. A good deal of calling and

running, and dragging about of furniture ensued, but at the end of an hour or thereabouts they were all comfortably seated round a supper-table, which, although of the plainest description, and lit by a couple of tallow candles in brass candlesticks, more than satisfied Hamilton ; and nothing could exceed the pleasure with which he looked around him. The novelty of his situation and the realization of his wish to be domesticated in a private family, aided, no doubt, considerably to produce this frame of mind, for he was by nature and education fastidious ; and had he not had an object in view it is more than probable that the extreme homeliness of the house arrangements would have more disgusted than amused him. Madame Rosenberg stood with a napkin pinned over the front of her dress, while she carved a large loin of veal, and distributed to each, beginning with her husband, the portion which she judged sufficient for their supper ;—a potato salad which she had also prepared in their presence with oil and vinegar, was added ; and Hildegarde and Crescenz carried round the plates to Hamilton's great surprise and indeed discomfort : it was in vain he jumped up and offered to assist them. Madame Rosenberg begged him to sit still, that Hildegarde

would bring him all he wanted ; and Crescenz, as in duty bound, would see that the Major had everything he required. With a coyness which would have been graceful had it not been slightly tinctured with affectation, Crescenz performed the required services ; Major Stultz declaring he had never in his life been so waited upon ; that she was a perfect Hebe, and ending by catching her hand and kissing it passionately. Crescenz looked across the table, and on finding Hamilton's large dark eyes fixed upon her, drew back, and behind the chair of her lover impatiently wiped the kiss, and with it some portion of gravy and potato which had probably adhered to his moustache, from her fair hand. On again looking towards Hamilton, half expecting some sign of approval, she found that he had turned to her father, and seemed altogether to have forgotten her presence. With some indignation she took her place at the table, and commenced her supper, internally vowing never to bestow either a word or look more on him ; and, if possible, to convince him without delay of her extreme dislike to him. She listened with apparent interest, while her mother and Major Stultz settled the day but one after for their solemn betrothal, which was to give her the name

of bride, a title only used in Germany during the term of engagement, and never after the ceremony of marriage has been performed.

Major Stultz rose to take leave, whispered a little while ostentatiously with Crescenz, and retired. Hamilton was accompanied by the whole family when he took possession of the two rooms appropriated to his use; at the back of the house they looked into another street, and were accessible by a back staircase which Madame Rosenberg informed him was considered a great convenience for single gentlemen, especially as she would give him a skeleton key which would open the house door, and admit him at all hours without the servants being obliged to sit up for him. Crescenz scarcely answered when he wished her good night, and he divined pretty accurately what was passing in her mind. He was heartily glad that she had adopted this line of conduct; was fully prepared to believe in her indifference: in fact, he gave her more credit for coquetry than she deserved, and determined in no way to interfere with her good resolutions or Major Stultz in future.

The next morning was wholly occupied by a visit to his bankers, the library, securing a place for six months at the theatre, and purchasing some

toys for Fritz, Gustle, and Peppy. He reached home some time after twelve o'clock, and found that they had waited dinner for him. Madame Rosenberg delicately informing him of the fact by shouting from the nursery door,—

“ You may bring in the soup now, Wally, for Mr. Hamilton is come.”

As far as Mr. Hamilton was concerned, the soup might have remained in the kitchen all day : he had not yet learned to eat ordinary German soup, which when not thickened into a “ family broth,” very much resembled the weak beef tea decocted by careful housekeepers for invalids ; he therefore played with his spoon until the boiled beef, which invariably succeeds, had made its appearance, and finished his repast with a piece of *zwetschgen* cake, which he found excellent, and much more easy to eat than to pronounce. The whole family rose from table at the same moment, and Hamilton was in the act of opening the door leading into the drawing-room, when he heard Madame Rosenberg call out,—

“ Hildegard, pick up Mr. Hamilton’s napkin ; don’t you see it lying on the floor ? ”

Hamilton sprang forward, raised, and threw it with a jerk across the back of his chair, not

clearly understanding what possible difference it could make; and thinking Madame Rosenberg very unnecessarily particular. His surprise was therefore great when he saw Hildegarde take the crumpled towel, and having endeavoured to lay it in the original folds, bind it with a piece of blue ribbon which had been placed on the table beside him for the purpose.

"Mr. Smith told me that people did not generally use napkins in England," said Madame Rosenberg, sagaciously nodding her head.

"Not use napkins! you surely must have misunderstood him: perhaps he said people did not use the same napkin twice."

"Not use a napkin twice!" cried Madame Rosenberg. "If that were the case I should have a pretty washing at the end of the three months! Rosenberg gets but two a week, and has moustaches. I expect that you will be able to manage like the girls, with one."

"I shall certainly cultivate a moustache forthwith, if it were only for the purpose of getting the two napkins a week!" said Hamilton, good-humouredly laughing as he left the room.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BETROTHAL.

THE afternoon of the next day the betrothal took place. Hamilton had expected an imposing ceremony, but not one of the many persons assembled appeared to consider it as anything but an occasion for drinking wine or coffee and eating cake. Crescenz and her sister must be excepted, they both looked greatly alarmed; and when the certificates of birth, baptism, vaccination, and confirmation, had been laid on the table, and the marriage contract read aloud and presented for signature, Crescenz fairly attempted to rush out of the room. She was brought back with some difficulty; and it was from Hamilton's hand that she received the pen with which she wrote her name. A present of a very handsome ring from Major Stultz, seemed in some degree to restore her equanimity, and a glass of champagne, judiciously administered by her father, enabled her to

receive the congratulations and enjoy the jokes of her bridesmaids. As evening drew on, the piano-forte was put in requisition, and dancing proposed. Hamilton immediately engaged Hildgarde: he was in England considered to dance well, and was, therefore, not a little surprised and mortified when, after a few turns, she sat down quietly, saying he was a most particularly disagreeable dancer.

"You are the first person who has told me so," he observed, somewhat piqued; for Englishmen are vulnerable on this point.

"Others have *thought* so, perhaps," said Hildgarde, carelessly, and following with her eyes Crescenz and Major Stultz; the latter forgetful of the hardships of his Russian campaign, and unmindful of the stoutness of his figure, was whirling round the room with a lightness which would have done credit to a man of one and twenty.

"How very well Major Stultz dances!" said Hamilton, when Crescenz and her partner soon after stopped near them.

"And you—why do not you dance?" asked Crescenz.

"Your sister says I dance badly."

"I said you were a disagreeable dancer," said

Hildegarde, "other people may think differently; but I particularly dislike being held so close, and having—"

Hamilton's face became crimson, and she left her sentence unfinished.

"Perhaps people dance differently in England," suggested Crescenz.

"Most probably they do not waltz at all there," said Major Stultz.

Hamilton explained with extraordinary warmth.

"Well, at all events—it is—and will ever remain, a German national dance; and, so I suppose, without giving offence, I may say that we Germans dance it better than you English. I have no doubt that you dance country-dances and Scotch reels perfectly, but—"

"I have never danced either the one or the other," said Hamilton, with a look of sovereign contempt.

"Well, Francaise's quadrilles, or whatever you call those complicated dances now coming into fashion here."

Hamilton did not answer; he had turned to Crescenz, and was now insisting on her waltzing with him that she might tell him the fault in his dancing. She murmured the words, "*Extra tour*,"

which seemed to satisfy Major Stultz, and then complied with his request. It was singular that Crescenz did not complain of being held too closely ; she was not disposed to find any fault whatever with his performance ; and it was with some difficulty that he induced her to say that there was something a little foreign in his manner, and that she believed he did not dance *quite* so smoothly as a German.

“Your sister’s personal dislike seems to influence her judgment on all occasions,” said Hamilton, glancing towards Hildegarde, who still, seated in the same place, was watching them with evident dissatisfaction.

“Hildegarde, come and help me to put candles in the candlesticks,” cried Madame Rosenberg : “we cannot let our friends grope about in the dark any longer.”

Hildegarde rose ;—as she passed Hamilton she said, in a low voice :

“For personal dislike, you may say detestation when you refer to yourself in future.”

“Most willingly—most gladly,” cried Hamilton, laughing. “I wish you to hate me with all your heart.”

“Then your wish is gratified ; I feel the greatest contempt”

"Halt!" cried Hamilton, still laughing, for her anger amused him. "I did not give you leave to feel contempt: I only said you might hate as . . ."

"Hildegarde, Hildegarde," cried Madame Rosenberg, impatiently,— "Why, what on earth is the girl about?"

"Quarrelling, as usual," muttered Major Stultz, shrugging his shoulders.

"Oh, she is not quarrelsome!" exclaimed Crescenz; "you don't understand her: she is right—quite right."

"Right to hate me without a cause!" cried Hamilton, pretending great astonishment.

"I did not exactly mean—that is—I think—I believe—I am sure Hildegarde does not hate you or anybody," said Crescenz, confusedly and retreating hastily to that part of the room which seemed by common consent appropriated to the unmarried female part of the company. At this moment the door opened, and Madame Rosenberg, followed by Hildegarde and the cook, entered the room, carrying lighted candles. A loud ringing of the house-bell was heard, and the cook, having deposited her candles, rushed out of the room to open the door.

"I dare say it's the Bergers," said Madame

Rosenberg, as she walked towards the piano-forte with her candles. "Better late than never. I'm glad she's come, for she plays waltzes charmingly; and as such days as this do not often occur in a family, we may as well keep it up."

Hamilton looked towards the door, and saw an elaborately dressed and extremely pretty person, with very long and profuse blond ringlets, leaning on the arm of an elderly man with a protruding chin. His recollection of having heard something about her or her companion was brought more distinctly to his mind, when he saw Crescenz start forward and embrace her, while she eagerly exclaimed:

"Oh, Lina! I have *so* longed to see you! *so* wished for your advice!"

After she had spoken with great animation to the Rosenbergs and her other acquaintances, she turned to Crescenz, who continuing to hold her hand, now reproached her for her neglect of her.

"My dear creature! I have been in Starnberg, or you should have seen me long ago. The doctor came for me this afternoon, and I have not been more than an hour in town. On such an occasion I was obliged to make myself smart, and you have no idea how I hurried! Is n't this dress a love?

the doctor's choice—he bought it at Schultz, and surprised me with it on my birth-day ! Conceive my being nineteen years old !” she continued in a whisper, leading Crescenz apart : “ I am really glad that I am married ; I should have been obliged to wait an eternity for Theodore ; he is now studying with the doctor, visits the hospitals with him, and dines with us every Sunday ! Heigho !—”

“ Is not the Doctor jealous ? ”

“ Jealous ! oh dear no—why should he be jealous ?—If Theodore had been rich I should have preferred him of course ; but a poor student !—the thing was absurd ! And yet I *did* love him—with all my heart too ! ”

“ I can easily imagine it,” said Crescenz, pensively ; “ and in Seon, of all places in the world ! ” and she sighed very expressively.

“ Why surely, dear ! you did not find any one at Seon with whom you could fall in love ? I beg Major Stultz's pardon, but—a—the company at Seon is a ”

“ Oh there were some very nice people there this year : Count Zedwitz and his family ;—his son, I am almost sure, proposed to Hildegard, though she won't acknowledge it.”

"Count Zedwitz! why, surely, Hildegarde would not be such a fool as to refuse such a—"

"Hush! dearest,—it's the greatest possible secret; and Hildegarde would never forgive me if she knew—"

"I don't believe a word of it," said the Doctor's wife, arranging a stray ringlet, "I don't believe a word of it. Hildegarde would have talked enough if there had been even a shadow of probability of such a thing. As to her having refused him, that is out of the nature of things! I suppose, dear," she added, shaking back her curls, "I suppose he turned to you when he was tired of Hildegarde? Did she frighten him with a fit of fury as she did me the day I read the letter from her father, which she had mislaid in the school room? Do you remember how she stormed and called me dishonorable, and said I was capable of any horrible act? I never forgave that Mademoiselle Hortense for not taking my part; but all the governesses were so proud of Hildegarde's beauty after her picture was painted, that she was allowed to do as she pleased."

"Don't talk of her," said Crescenz, in a low voice: "I know you never liked her."

"They called us the rival beauties at school

you know, which was quite enough to make us hate each other all our lives ; but now that I am married, all rivalry has ceased. I have got a position in society, especially since the Doctor has been called in to attend the Royal Family, and”

“ You don’t say so ! ” exclaimed Crescenz, interrupting her.

“ Yes, my dear, he is not exactly appointed, but when the other physicians were out of town, he was sent for to attend one of the ladies of the court, who had been obliged to remain behind from illness, and she promised to use all her influence for him ;—indeed his practice is so extensive that he does not require anything of the kind—but then for appearance sake—and it sounds well you know,—it sounds well ! ” and she played with her pocket-handkerchief which was trimmed with very broad cotton lace. “ But I forgot, you were going to tell me that you had fallen in love with somebody at Seon : if it were not this Count Zedwitz, who was it ? ”

“ Nobody,” said Crescenz, wiping her eyes with her little cotton handkerchief ornamented with a few coarse indigo-dyed threads for a border,—
“ Nobody ! ”

"I assure you, Cressy, as a married woman, I can give you much better advice now than in former days when I was as silly as yourself. You had better confide in me."

"I have nothing to confide," replied Crescenz, diligently biting the before-mentioned blue thread border of her handkerchief.

"Well, if you don't choose to be confiding, perhaps you will be communicative, and tell me who is that very tall, very young, and singularly handsome man talking to your father near the window?"

"That 's hé," said Crescenz, blushing.

"Who?"

"The Englishman."

"What Englishman?"

"The Englishman that we met at Seon."

"So!" whistled, rather than exclaimed, the doctor's wife. "So! — hem! — a — some excuse for a little sentiment, I must allow, Cressy. How does he happen to be here this evening?"

"He is living with us; he boards with mamma this winter."

"So! Can he speak German?"

"Oh yes, very well."

"Introduce him; I should like to know him."

"I *cannot*."

"You cannot! Why, I could have introduced Theodore to all the world, and have ordered him about every where. Beckon, or call him over, like a dear."

"Not for worlds!"

"I do believe you are afraid of him!"

"Afraid of him! What an idea!" said Crescenz, laughing faintly.

"Yes, afraid of him," persisted her friend; "and yet he is not at all a person to inspire terror."

"Oh no, not at all," said Crescenz; "I don't think I am at all afraid of him. Why should I?"

"Why, indeed! See, Crescenz, he is looking this way now; just turn towards him and make some sign, or else I must apply to Hildegarde."

"Oh, go to Hildegarde, if you like," said Crescenz, half laughing; "but most probably they have just been quarrelling; and, in that case, she will send you to papa or mamma."

"For that matter, I might as well go to your father at once, as he is standing beside him; for a married woman it would be of no consequence, you know; but, still, I should prefer the introduction to appear accidental. Men are generally vain—especially Englishmen, they say."

"Oh he is not at all vain, though Hildegarde

insists that he is ; and says, too, that he ridicules everybody. She took an inveterate dislike to him at first sight."

"Well that does surprise me, for his appearance is certainly prepossessing ; but I think also he *has* a tolerably good opinion of himself, in so far I must agree with her ; but why should he not ? He is certainly good-looking, probably clever, and no doubt rich !"

"Oh he is very clever," said Crescenz ; "even Hildegarde allows that."

"Well, my dear, to return, will you introduce him or not ?"

"Pray, don't ask me ?"

The doctor's wife shrugged her shoulders, shook back her blond ringlets, and walked with an evident attempt at unconcern, across the room.

"Hildegarde," she said, tapping the shoulder which had been purposely turned towards her, "Hildegarde, will you introduce me to your Englishman ? Crescenz says he is very clever ; and, you know, I like clever people, and foreigners : but you must manœuvre a little, and not let him know that I particularly requested to make his acquaintance."

"I never manœuvre," replied Hildegarde,

bluntly; "you might have known that by this time."

"I did not just mean to say manœuvre; I only wished you to understand that you were to manage it so that he should not think I cared about the matter; in short, it ought to be a sort of chance introduction."

"Will you, by chance, walk across the room with me?"

"Impossible!"

"Shall I call him over here by chance?"

"Call!—no, not call; but look as if you expected him to come. He will be sure to understand."

"He will not; for I do not expect him in the least. Crescenz could have told you that we are not on particularly good terms. You had better ask mamma."

"*Mein Gott!* What a fuss the people make about this Englishman. I think you are all afraid of him. Crescenz certainly is."

"I dislike him; but I am not afraid of him, as you shall see. Mr. Hamilton," she called out distinctly, and Hamilton, though surprised, immediately approached her. Madame Berger shook her hand and the pocket-handkerchief most playfully, and then took refuge on the sofa at

some distance. Hildegard followed, quietly explaining that Madame Berger wished to make his acquaintance because he was a foreigner, and supposed to be clever. Hamilton smiled as he seated himself beside his new acquaintance, and in a few minutes they were evidently amusing each other so much, that Crescenz observed it, and said, in a low voice, to her sister, "You were quite right, Hildegard, Lina is a desperate flirt. Do look how she is laughing, and allowing Mr. Hamilton to admire her dress."

"He is making a fool of her. Now, Crescenz, if you are not blind, you can see that expression of his face I have so often described to you."

"I only see he is laughing, and pulling the lace of her handkerchief, which she has just shown him. I dare say he is admiring it, for it is real cambric, and very fine."

"He is not admiring it; his own is ten times finer."

"Indeed! I have never remarked that: how very odd that you should!"

"Not at all odd," said Hildegard quickly; "every one has some sort of fancy. You like bracelets and rings, and I like fine pocket-handkerchiefs."

"Well, that is the oddest fancy," said Crescenz,

"the very last thing I should have thought of. . I don't care at all for pocket-handkerchiefs."

"Nor I for rings or bracelets," replied Hildegarde.

"Come here, girls," cried Madame Rosenberg ; "what are you doing with your two heads together there ? Come and help me to make tea. Hildegarde, there is boiling water in the kitchen. Grescenz, you can cut bread and butter, or arrange the cakes."

Tea was then a beverage only coming into fashion in Germany, and, in that class of society where it was still seldom made, the infusion caused considerable commotion. Hildegarde and her step-mother were unsuccessful in their attempt: the tea tasted strongly of smoke and boiled milk. Everybody sipped it, and wondered what was the matter, while Madame Rosenberg assured her guests that she had twice made "a tea," and that it had been excellent ; the cook, Walburg, or, as she was called familiarly, Wally, must have spoiled it by hurrying the boiling of the water. Mr. Hamilton, as an Englishman, would, of course, know how to make tea ; he really must be so good as to accompany her to the kitchen, and they would make it over again.

Hamilton agreed to the proposition with some

reluctance, for he had found his companion amusing ; but, as she proposed accompanying him, he was soon disposed to think that tea-making in a kitchen as amusing as it was new to him. Madame Rosenberg, Hildegarde, Crescenz, and Major Stultz followed, forming a sort of procession in the corridor, and greatly crowding the small, but remarkably neat kitchen where they assembled. If it had not been for the stone-floor, it was as comfortable a room as any in the house ; the innumerable brightly shining brass and copper pans and pots, pudding and pie models, forming the ornaments. Round the hearth, or rather what is in England called a hot-hearth—for the fire was invisible—they all stood to watch the boiling of a pan full of fresh water, which had been placed on one of the apertures made for that purpose. They looked at the water, and then at each other, and then again at the water ; and then Wally shoved more wood underneath. Still the water boiled not ; and Madame Rosenberg and Major Stultz returned to the drawing-room, Madame Berger having undertaken, with Hamilton's assistance, to make the most excellent tea possible.

“It is an odd thing,” she observed, seating herself on the polished copper edge of the hearth,

and carefully arranging the folds of her dress, "it is an odd thing, but nevertheless a fact, that when one watches, and wishes water to boil, it wont boil, and as soon as one turns away it begins to bubble and sputter at once. Now, Mr. Hamilton, can you explain why this is the case?"

"I don't know," said Hamilton, laughing, "excepting that, perhaps, as the watching of a saucepan full of water is by no means an amusing occupation, one easily gets tired, and finds that the time passes unusually slowly."

"All I can say is—that as long as I look at that water, it will not boil" . . .

"Then pray look at me," said Hamilton, who had seated himself upon the dresser, one foot on the ground, the other enacting the part of a pendulum, while in his hands he held a plate of little macaroni cakes, which Crescenz had just arranged,—"pray look at me. German cakes are decidedly better than English—these are really delicious."

"Oh I am so fond of those cakes," she cried, springing towards him, "so excessively fond of them. Surely," she added, endeavouring to reach the plate, which he laughingly held just beyond her reach, "surely you do not mean to devour them alone."

"You shall join me," said Hamilton, "on condition that every cake with a visible piece of citron, or a whole almond, on it belongs to me."

"Agreed."

Her share proved small, and a playful scuffle ensued.

Crescenz turned towards the window, Hildegard looked on contemptuously. At this moment, Walburg exclaimed, "The water boils" and they all turned towards the hearth. "How much tea shall I put into the teapot?" asked Madame Berger appealing to Hamilton.

"The more you put in the better it will be," answered Hamilton, without moving.

"Shall I put in all that is in this paper?"

Hamilton nodded, and the tea was made.

"Ought it not to boil a little now?"

"By no means."

"Perhaps," said Walburg, "a little piece of vanille would improve the taste."

"On no account," said Hamilton.

"The best thing to give it a flavour is rum," observed Madame Berger.

"I forbid the rum, though I must say the idea is not bad," said Hamilton, laughing.

Hildegard put the teapot on a little tray and

left the kitchen just as her step-mother entered it.

“Well, the tea ought to be good! It has required long enough to make it, I am sure!” she observed, while setting down a lamp which she had brought with her. “Crescenz, your father, it seems, has invited a whole lot of people without telling me, and he wishes to play a rubber of whist in the bedroom. I have no more handsome candlesticks, so you must light the lamp; the wick is in it, I know, for I cleaned it myself before I went to Seon, so you have only to put in the oil and light it.” She took Madame Berger’s arm, saying, “This is poor amusement for you, standing in the kitchen all the evening,” and walked away, without perceiving Hamilton, who was examining the construction of the hearth and chimney with an interest which greatly astonished the cook.

“Oh, Wally—what shall I do?” cried Crescenz, “I never touched a lamp in my life, and I am sure I cannot light it.”

“It’s quite easy, Miss Crescenz; I’ll pour in the oil, and you light these pieces of wood and hold them to the wick.”

Crescenz did as she was desired.

"Stop till the oil is in, Miss, if you please," said Wally.

The oil was put in, the wick lighted, the cylinder fixed, and Crescenz raised the globe towards its place, but either it was too heavy for her hand or she had not mentally measured the height, for it struck with considerable force against the upper part of the lamp, and broke to pieces with a loud crash.

"Oh, heavens, what *shall* I do!" she cried in her agitation, clasping the piece of glass which had remained in her hand. "What *shall* I do! Mamma will be so angry! I dare not tell her—for my life I dare not. What on earth shall I do!"

"Send out and buy another as fast as you can," said Hamilton, "is there no glass or lamp shop near this?"

"I don't know," said Crescenz, blushing deeply.

"Yes, there is," said Walburg, "in the next street, just round the corner, you know, Miss Crescenz . . . but a . . ." and she stopped and looked confused.

"I *must* tell mamma, or get Hildegarde to tell her. Oh what a misfortune! what a dreadful misfortune!"

"Go out and buy a globe, and don't waste time looking at the fragments," said Hamilton, impatiently, to Walburg. "There is no necessity for saying anything about the matter."

"But," said Walburg, hesitatingly, and looking first at Crescenz, and then at Hamilton, "but I have no money."

"Stupid enough my not thinking of that," said Hamilton, taking out his purse.

"That is at least a florin too much," cried Walburg, enchanted at his generosity.

"Never mind, run, run ; keep what remains for yourself, but make haste."

"Oh, indeed I cannot allow this," said Crescenz, faintly ; "it would be very wrong — and — " but the door had already closed on the messenger.

"Suppose, now, — mamma should come," said Crescenz, uneasily.

"Not at all likely, as every one is drinking tea."

The drawing-room door opened, and the gay voices of the assembled company resounded in the passage.

"I knew it, I knew it ; she is coming," cried Crescenz ; — but it was only Hildegard, who brought the empty tea-pot to re-fill it.

She looked very grave when she heard what had

occurreo, and proposed Hamilton's accompanying her to the drawing-room, as he might be missed and Major Stultz displeased: he felt that she was right, and followed silently. His tea was unanimously praised, but Madame Rosenberg exhibited some natural consternation on hearing that the whole contents of her paper cornet, with which she had expected to regale her friends at least half-a-dozen times, had been inconsiderately emptied at once into the tea-pot!

"It was no wonder the tea was good! English tea indeed! Any one could make tea after that fashion! But then, to be sure, English people never thought about what anything cost. For her part, she found the tea bitter and recommended a spoonful or two of rum." On her producing a little green bottle, the company assembled around her with their tea-cups, and she administered to each one, two, or three spoonfuls, as they desired it.

In the meantime, Mr. Rosenberg sat in the adjoining dark bed-room at the card-table — sometimes shuffling, sometimes drumming on the cards, and whistling indistinctly. Hildegard had observed an expression of impatience on his face, and to prevent inquiries about the lamp, she

quietly brought candles from the drawing-room and placed them beside him.

"Thank, you, Hildegarde," said her father, more loudly than he generally spoke; "thank you, my dear; you never forget my existence, and even obey my thoughts sometimes."

"Why, where 's the lamp?" cried Madame Rosenberg; "where 's the lamp? What on earth can Crescenz have done with the lamp?"

"Broken it, most probably," said Mr. Rosenberg, drily; "Hildegarde, place a chair for Major Stultz. She 's a good girl after all, major! a very good girl, I can tell you."

"No doubt, no doubt," replied the Major, bowing over the proffered chair.

"Go and see why your sister does not bring the lamp," cried Madame Rosenberg, impatiently.

As Hildegarde slowly and with evident reluctance walked to the door, she unconsciously looked towards Hamilton; he was listening very attentively to the rhapsody of sense and nonsense poured forth by the Doctor's wife, who only occasionally stopped to shake back, with a mixture of childishness and coquetry, the long fair locks which at times half concealed her face. Hamilton, however, saw the look, understood it, and

gazed so fixedly at the door, even after she had closed it, that his companions observed it, and said abruptly, "Why did you look so oddly at Hildegarde; and why do you stare at the door after she has left the room?"

"If you prefer my staring at you, I am quite willing to do so."

"You know very well I did not mean any such thing," she cried with affected pettishness; "can you not be serious for a moment, and answer a plain question?"

"I dislike answering questions," said Hamilton absently, and once more looking towards the door.

"Now, there you are again with your eyes fixed on that tiresome . . ."

He turned round, took a well-stuffed sofa-cushion, and, placing it before him, leaned his elbows upon it, while he quietly but steadily fixed his eyes on her face, and said—

"Now, Madame, if it must be so, I am ready to be questioned."

"You really are the most disagreeable person I ever met."

"That is an observation and not a question."

"You are the vainest—"

Hamilton looked down, and seemed determined not to interrupt her again.

"Are you offended at my candour?" she added, abruptly.

"Not in the least."

"Put away that cushion, and don't look as if you were getting tired."

"But I thought you were going to question me?"

"No, I am afraid."

"Well, then, I must question you," said Hamilton, laughing. "Why may I not look at Mademoiselle Rosenberg; and why may I not look at the door, if it amuse me?"

"You may not look at the door, because in doing so you turn your back to me, which is not civil," she replied, readily.

"Very well answered; but now tell me why I may not look at Mademoiselle Rosenberg?"

"Oh, you may look at her certainly; but—but—but—the expression of your face was not as if you disliked her."

"And why should I dislike her?"

"I don't know, indeed,—only Crescenz told me that you often quarrelled with her; and as Hildgarde knows no medium, she most probably hates

you with all her soul. You have no idea of the intensity of her likings and dislikings ! ”

“ Indeed ! ”

“ At school she took a fancy to one of the governesses, the most severe disagreeable person imaginable ;—can you believe it ? This Mademoiselle Hortense was able to do whatever she pleased with her ; her slightest word was a command to Hildegarde. I have seen her, when in the greatest passion, grow pale and become perfectly quiet when Mademoiselle Hortense suddenly came into the room. It was, however, not from fear, for Hildegarde has no idea of fearing anybody : she is terribly courageous ! ”

“ Altogether rather an interesting character,” observed Hamilton.

“ Do you think so ? I cannot agree with you. At school we all liked Crescenz much better.”

“ Very possibly—I can imagine your liking the one and admiring the other.”

“ As to the admiration,” said Madame Berger, looking down,—“ as to the admiration of the girls at school, that was very much divided ; Hildegarde headed one party and I the other.”

“ You were rivals, then ? ”

“ We were, in everything—even in the affection

of her sister. It was through Crescenz alone that I was able to tease her when I chose to do so."

"But you did not often choose it, I am sure."

"Oh, I assure you, with all her love for Crescenz, she often tyrannized over the poor girl, and scarcely allowed her to have an opinion of her own on any subject. Crescenz was a little afraid of her too, at times. Cressy is the dearest creature in the world, but not at all brilliant: we all loved her, but we sometimes laughed at her too; and you can form no conception of the fury of Hildegarde when she used to find it out. Crescenz has confessed to me, when we were alone, that her sister had often lectured her on her simplicity, and had told her what she was to do and say when we attempted to joke with her. Nothing more comical than seeing Crescenz playing Hildegarde."

"Mademoiselle Rosenberg was considered clever?" asked Hamilton.

"Clever! why yes — as far as learning was concerned she was the best in the school, and that was the reason that Madame and the governesses overlooked her violence of temper: she is very ill tempered."

"That is a pity," said Hamilton, "for she seems to have excellent dispositions."

"I never could discover anything excellent about her," said Madame Berger, biting her lip slightly.

"Perhaps," observed Hamilton, "she is more violent than ill tempered; and you say that she can control herself in the presence of any one she likes."

"But it is exactly these likings and dislikings that I find so abominable: for instance, she loves her father—well, he is a very good-looking quiet sort of insipid man—she however thinks him perfection, and is outrageous if people do not show an absurd respect for all his opinions. What he says must be law for all the world! On the other hand, she dislikes her step-mother, who is nothing very extraordinary, I allow, rather vulgar too; but still she has her good qualities. Hildegarde cannot see them, and will not allow Crescenz to become aware of them either! Is not this detestable?"

"It is a proof that she has strong prejudices; but—"

The door just then was opened, and Crescenz entered the room, carrying the lamp and smiling

brightly. It was heavy, and Hamilton rose to assist her in placing it on the table before the sofa where they sat.

"Thank you, oh thank you!" cried Crescenz, with a fervency which Madame Berger thought so exaggerated that she found it necessary to explain.

"That dear girl is so grateful for the most trifling attention! It is generally the case with us all for a short time after we leave school."

"There's the lamp!" exclaimed Madame Rosenberg, "and not broken! What do you say now, Rosenberg? I declare it burns better than usual;—the globe has been cleaned, eh, Crescenz?"

"Yes, Wally cleaned it a little; it was very dusty," replied Crescenz, looking archly at Hamilton, and seeming to enjoy the equivocation.

Hildegarde blushed deeply, and walked into the next room.

Hamilton saw the blush, and looked after her, while Madame Berger whispered,—

"Did you see that?—she is jealous of the praise bestowed on her sister."

"Jealous! oh no," said Hamilton, still following her with his eyes.

"I beg your pardon!" cried Madame Berger,

"I was not at all aware that I was speaking to an adorer: I really must go and tell her the conquest she has made."

Perhaps she expected him to detain her, or she feared a rebuff from Hildegarde; for she waited a moment before she proceeded into the next room. Hamilton followed just in time to hear Hildegarde say,—

"Pshaw! you are talking about what you don't understand," as she turned contemptuously away.

Madame Berger, to conceal her annoyance at Hildegarde's imperturbability, turned to Crescenz, who had been placed next Major Stultz, at his particular request, in order to bring him *luck*. Her presence, however, not having produced the desired effect, he was told by Madame Rosenberg that those who were fortunate in love were always sure to be unfortunate at cards, which seemed to afford him great consolation; while Crescenz smiled and played with his counters and purse.

"I am sure, Crescenz," said Madame Berger, "I am sure you are thinking what sort of purse you will make for Major Stultz this Christmas! You cannot allow him in future to use leather. I can teach you to make a new kind of purse, which is very strong and pretty."

"Oh, pray do!" cried Crescenz, starting up; "you know I like making purses, of all things. When will you begin it for me?"

"To-morrow, if you like. I say, Cressy," continued Madame Berger, in a whisper, "what makes Hildegarde so horribly savage this evening?"

"I did not observe it."

"She is most particularly disagreeable, I can assure you. I attempted some most innocent *badinage* about Mr. Hamilton, and she—"

"Oh, about him you must not jest; she hates him so excessively—"

"Not a bit of it,—and he does not hate her either."

"You don't say so!"

"I say so, and think so; and you will see that I am right. Why, he already makes as many excuses as your father for her ill-temper. If you had only heard him!"

"I did not think Hildegarde capable of playing double," cried Crescenz with emotion.

"She is capable of anything. Had you but seen the look of intelligence that passed between them when she left the room to inquire about you, and the lamp! it would have convinced you at once. And then he watched the door, and . . ."

“Ah, yes !” exclaimed Crescenz, apparently greatly relieved ; “I understand. No, Lina, this time I am right, and you are wrong. I know why he looked at Hildegarde, and at the door.”

“You do !—do you ? Then, come and tell me all about it. By-the-bye, I should like to have a long talk with you, to learn how matters stand. This Mr. Hamilton is uncommonly good-looking and amusing ; I should like to know what brought him to Seon, and how it happened that he came to live with your mother, and all that. If we have not time to-night, you can tell me to-morrow, while you are learning the purse-stitch.”

An appointment was made for the next day, and the party soon after broke up.

CHAPTER XII.

DOMESTIC DETAILS.

HAMILTON had gone out early to visit Zedwitz, and look at a horse recommended by Major Stultz. On his return, when walking towards his room, he heard some one singing so gaily in the kitchen, that as he passed the door he could not resist the temptation to look in. Crescenz was standing opposite the hearth, a long-handled wooden spoon in her hand, her sleeves tucked up, and her round white arms embellished with streaks of smut and flour; while a linen apron, of large dimensions, preserved the greater part of her dress from injury. Her face was flushed, partly from heat but more from pleasure. As soon as she perceived Hamilton in the door-way, she at once ceased singing, smiled merrily, and invited him to enter. Now to this kitchen Hamilton had taken rather a fancy; he thought it by many degrees the best furnished room in the house: in fact it was a pretty and

cheerful apartment, and kept with a neatness common in Germany, where it is usual to see the female members of the burghers' families employed in culinary offices.

"I have got my first lesson in cookery to-day," she exclaimed joyfully; "and I have assisted mamma to make a tart, and you see I am cooking these vegetables," she added, plunging her wooden spoon into one of the pots.

"Oh, yes, Miss," cried the cook, "that's the soup, and the noodles will be all squashed if you work them up after that fashion."

"Well this is the saur-kraut," she said, eagerly drawing one of the saucepans towards her; "this is the *saur-kraut*."

"I could have told you that myself," cried Hamilton, laughing; "the smell is too odious to admit of a doubt."

"But the taste is very good," said Crescenz.

"I cannot agree with you, taste and smell are horrible in the extreme."

"I never heard of any one who did not like saur-kraut," said Crescenz, with some surprise; "do people never make it in England?"

"I never saw it, excepting at the house of a friend who had been long ambassador at one of

the German courts, and then it was handed about as a sort of curiosity."

"How odd! England seems to be altogether different from Germany?" she half asked, while shaking her head inquiringly.

"The difference is in many things besides the eating or not eating of saur-kraut," answered Hamilton; "but as you are such a famous cook I must beg of you to give me something else to-day for I cannot eat your kraut."

"Oh, yes," cried Crescenz delightedly; "Wally what shall we cook for Mr. Hamilton? I'm sure I never thought I should have liked this cooking so much!" As she spoke she with difficulty repressed an inclination to dance about the kitchen.

"Indeed, as you are learning it, Miss Crescenz," said Walburg; "it must be very agreeable. To think that you will so soon have a house of your own, and a rich husband who will let you have everything you like to cook. Tarts and creams every day. The Major knows what's good, or I'm greatly mistaken."

This speech completely sobered Crescenz; had Hamilton not been present she might have been loquacious, but she now looked confused and

turned to leave the kitchen, saying it was time to wash her hands for dinner.

“ But I thought you were going to find me a substitute for the saur-kraut.”

“ Wally will send in something,” she answered rubbing her arm with her apron to avoid looking up as she walked into the passage. Hamilton was so near her as she entered her room that a feeling of politeness prevented her from shutting the door, and he saw Hildegarde sitting at a small deal table between her brothers Fritz and Gustle,—a few books and a slate were before her, and as the door opened she was returning a book to the former with the remark, “ This will never do, Fritz. You have not learned one word of your lesson !”

“ *Kreuz ! Himmel ! Saperment !*” exclaimed Fritz, pitching the book up to the ceiling ; “ this is exacting too much ! when a fellow has been all the morning at school, and comes home for an hour or so, to eat and amuse himself—to be set down in this way to learn French. I tell you what, Hildegarde, I shall begin to hate the sight of you if you plague me with these old grammars.”

“ What shall I do with him ?” asked Hildegarde, appealing to her sister.

“ Fritz, learn your lesson — there’s a love !”

interposed Crescenz; "see what a good boy Gustle is! and she caressingly placed her hand on the shoulder of the latter, who was industriously rolling the leaf of his book into the form of a trumpet, and yawning tremendously.

"I will give up all idea of ever entering the cadet corps, or ever being an officer," cried Fritz, kicking the book as it lay upon the ground; "rather than write these odious exercises, and listen to Hildegarde's long explanations."

"But think of the sword and the uniform, Fritz," said Crescenz, coaxingly.

"*Donner and Doria!*—what is the use of a sword and uniform, when I must learn vocabulary, and write French exercises?"

"Come, Fritz," cried Hildegarde, authoritatively, "let me hear no more of this absurd swearing; it does not at all become a boy of your age. If you will not learn your lesson, I can, at least, correct your exercise."

She stretched out her hand for the slate. Fritz anticipated her, seized, and flung it up in the air, as he had done the grammar; but it did not fall so harmlessly. Hamilton, who had been standing at the open door, rushed forward, but was too late to prevent its descending with con-

siderable force upon her temple, where it made a wound, from which the blood instantly began to trickle in large dark drops. Hildegarde started up angrily, while Fritz, after the first moment of dismay had passed, ran towards her and throwing his arms round her, exclaimed, "Forgive me, forgive me—indeed I did not intend to hurt you."

"If papa has come home from his *bureau*," said Crescenz, preparing to leave the room; "I'll go this moment and tell him."

"Stay," cried Hildegarde, hastily; "he says he did not do it on purpose: and after all, I am not much hurt. You must not tell papa or mamma either."

"Well, you certainly are the best fellow in the world, Hildegarde," cried Fritz. "I declare I would rather be cuffed by you than kissed by Crescenz."

"And cuffed you would have been, had you been near enough," said Hildegarde, laughing, while she poured some water into a basin.

"Mamma will be sure to see the cut, and ask how it happened," said Crescenz.

"I can easily hide it under my hair when it has stopped bleeding."

"Now just for that, Hildegarde," cried Fritz, "I promise to learn as many lessons as you please for the next fortnight."

Madame Rosenberg's step, and the jingling of her keys alarmed them all. Hamilton turned to meet her in the passage, saying, "Can I speak to you for five minutes?"

"To be sure you can, and longer, if you like," she replied, hooking her keys into the string of her apron. "Just let me look how things are going on in the kitchen, and I am at your service as long as you please. Put a cover on that pot, Walburg, and tell Miss Crescenz not to forget the powdered sugar for the tart, and the apples for the boy's luncheon. And now," she said, turning to Hamilton, and leading the way to her room, "what have you got to say? You look so serious that I suspect you are going to tell me that you dislike your rooms, as they look into a back street, and are near a coppersmith's. Captain Black left me for that reason, although I told him he could look out of the drawing-room windows as much as he pleased, and receive all his visitors there. I could not make the coppersmith leave his shop, you know; though this much I must say, that in winter the nuisance

is less felt than in summer, when the workmen during the fine weather hammer away all day in the lane, but in winter they work in the house, and shut the doors, so that they are scarcely heard at all."

"I have slept too soundly to hear the copper-smiths," said Hamilton, smiling; "and during the day I have been too seldom in my room to be disturbed by them. In fact, I find so much to amuse—I mean to say, so much to interest me as a foreigner in your house that I do not think half a dozen smiths could induce me to leave you at present."

"I am glad to hear it, for I like you very much, and so does Rosenberg."

"Then I may hope you will not be offended if I request to have wax-candles in my room, and . . . a —fresh napkin every day," said Hamilton, with some embarrassment.

"This can easily be managed," said Madame Rosenberg. "Neither Mr. Smith nor Captain Black ever asked for wax candles; but I suppose you have been brought up expensively. Now, don't you think spermaceti candles would do just as well for a young man of your age — such candles as you may have seen in my silver candle-

sticks for company? Of course, I only mention this on your account."

"You are very kind. I shall be quite satisfied with spermaceti — but I have still something to request."

"I can save you the trouble," said Madame Rosenberg, interrupting him. "You are not satisfied with your dinner, and wish to go to a *table d'hôte*."

"By no means!" cried Hamilton, eagerly. "There you wrong me. I do not in the least care what I eat."

"But, indeed," said Madame Rosenberg, "I don't think it would be a bad plan were you to do so, after all, for you see the girls must learn to cook, and things will be spoiled sometimes. It is quite enough to have Rosenberg discontented, without—"

"Oh, I promise never to be discontented," said Hamilton, laughing good-humouredly. "You have no idea how indifferent I am on this subject."

"I must say, Crescenz seems to have great taste for cookery," observed Madame Rosenberg, complaisantly; "very great taste indeed; but I rather expect to find that Hildegarde has no talent that way. I suspect we shall often have

burnt cakes and spoiled puddings when her turn comes. But you were going to say something else, I believe?"

"I was going to say, that I have been looking at horses this morning which I feel greatly disposed to purchase, if I were sure of finding a stable near this and a respectable groom."

"Why, how lucky!" cried Madame Rosenberg. "There is now actually a stable to let in this house; the new first-floors don't keep horses, so you can have it all to yourself; and old Hans asked me only yesterday if I could not recommend his son to some one who wanted a groom or coachman? I will go down with you at once, and look at the stable, and you can speak to old Hans about his son."

The arrangements were soon completed, and as they ascended the stairs together they met two very well dressed women, who bowed civilly, but distantly to Madame Rosenberg. When they had passed she observed to Hamilton—

"The new lodgers for the first floor: they come on the 29th of this month, and have been looking at their apartments, which are being papered and painted. On the second floor we shall find our landlord, who has the warehouse below

stairs, as he has six or eight children, and they make a tremendous noise ; I am better pleased to live above than below them, though it is not so noble !”

“ After dinner, Hamilton, finding himself alone with Crescenz in the drawing-room, insisted on her giving him a lesson in German waltzing ; she had just completed her instructions, and they were whirling round the room for the first time, when the door was opened, and Hildegarde having looked in, closed it again without speaking.

“ There, now !” cried Crescenz, walking with a look of great vexation towards the open window : “ was there ever anything so provoking ! and after our explanation last night, too ! but she really requires too much !”

“ What does she require ?” asked Hamilton, taking possession of the other half of the window, and leaning on one of the cushions, which, as usual in Germany, were conveniently placed for the elbows of those who habitually gazed into the street. “ What does she require ?”

“ That I should never, for one moment, forget that I have promised to marry Major Stultz. I know quite well that she disapproves of my having danced with you.”

"And if you were to go to a ball now, would you not be at liberty to dance with whomever you pleased?"

"Oh, of course."

"Then, why not with me?"

"Oh, because—because—she knows that—I—that you—

"In fact," said Hamilton, "you have told her of my inexcusable conduct the day we were on the Alp?"

"No," replied Crescenz, blushing deeply, "I have only told her that you cannot marry without your father's consent—that the younger sons of English people cannot marry—just what you told me yourself."

"The recollection of that day will cause me regret as long as I live," said Hamilton, blushing in his turn; "thoughtless words on such a subject are quite unpardonable. I hope you have forgotten all I said!"

"I cannot forget," said Crescenz, looking intently into the street to hide her emotion,—“I cannot forget—it was the first time I had ever heard anything of that kind, and was so exactly what I had imagined in every respect.”

Hamilton bit his lip, and replied gravely, "It

was the novelty alone which gave importance to my words; I am convinced, had you considered for a moment, you would have laughed at me as I deserved. Major Stultz must often have said—”

“Major Stultz,” said Crescenz, contemptuously, “never speaks of anything but how comfortably we shall live together, and what we shall have for dinner, and how many servants we shall be able to keep, and all those sorts of things, which make it impossible to forget one year of his age, or one bit of his ugliness?”

“He is a very good-natured man,” said Hamilton, “and Zedwitz told me, has been a very distinguished officer.”

“You are just beginning to talk like Hildergarde,” cried Crescenz impatiently, “and from you, who are the cause of my unhappiness, I will not bear it.”

“The cause of your unhappiness!” repeated Hamilton slowly; “if I really could believe that possible nothing would induce me to remain an hour longer in this house.”

“Oh, no,” cried Crescenz hastily! “no, I did not mean what I said. Oh, no! you must have seen that I am not unhappy! I—I—am very happy!” and she burst into tears as she spoke.

"Well, this is a punishment for thoughtlessness!" exclaimed Hamilton starting from his place at the window, and striding up and down the room. "Surely, surely, such vague expressions as mine were, did not deserve such a serious construction!"

"Vague expressions," repeated Crescenz, looking up through her tears,—*"serious construction! Did you not mean what you said?"*

"By heaven! I don't know what I said, or what I meant," cried Hamilton, vehemently.

Crescenz's sobs became frightfully audible.

"Crescenz—forgive me," he said hastily; "once more I ask your pardon, and entreat of you to forget my folly. Let this subject never again be mentioned, if you would not make me hate myself."

"But," sobbed Crescenz, "but tell me, at least, that you were not, as Hildegarde said, making a fool of me. Tell me, oh tell me, that you love me, and I am satisfied."

"You—you do not know what you are saying," cried Hamilton, involuntarily smiling at her extreme simplicity. "You are asking me to repeat a transgression which I most heartily repent. Situated as you are, such a confession on my

part now deliberately made would be little less than—a crime.”

“ You mean, because I am betrothed ? ”

He was spared an answer by Hildegarde's entrance with a small tray and coffee-cups. It was in vain that Crescenz turned to the window to conceal her tears — Hildegarde saw them, and turning angrily to Hamilton, exclaimed,

“ This is most unjustifiable conduct — dishonourable — ”

“ Oh stop ! Hildegarde,” cried Crescenz, beseechingly : “ Pray stop ! You are, as usual, doing him injustice, and misunderstand him altogether.”

“ Do not attempt a justification,” cried Hamilton, impatiently : “ she will not believe you. And,” he added in a whisper, “ in fact, I do not deserve it.”

Walburg interrupted them by half opening the door and informing them mysteriously that an officer was without who had asked for Mr. Hamilton.

“ Show him into my sitting-room, and say I shall be with him in a moment.”

“ My visit is only partly intended for you, Hamilton,” said Zedwitz, entering the room. “ I wish also to pay my respects to Madame Rosenberg.”

He had scarcely time to glance towards Hildegarde before she left the room, followed by her sister.

"The young ladies are not particularly civil to you," observed Hamilton, seating himself on the sofa.

"Why, you did not expect them to remain here with us, did you?"

"To be sure I did."

"I did not, but I expect them to return with their mother."

Crescenz did. Hildegarde did not. And in consequence Zedwitz's visit to Madame Rosenberg was very short, and he soon adjourned to Hamilton's room.

"Why, what's this?" cried Madame Rosenberg, peeping into the coffee-pot. "I do declare Mr. Hamilton has forgotten to drink his coffee!"

"Let me take it to him," said Crescenz, advancing towards the table.

"You will do no such thing," said her step-mother, waving her hastily back. "No such thing—and I think—that is the Major—but it is no matter; it is not necessary to explain. Call Hildegarde."

Hildegarde came, and was desired to carry the tray to Hamilton's room.

" May I not send Walburg ? "

" You may not, because I have sent her on an errand, and the coffee is too cold to be kept waiting until her return, now that the fire is out in the kitchen. "

" But — but —, " hesitated Hildegarde, " Mr. Hamilton is not alone. "

" Count Zedwitz is in his room, but he won't bite you, so go at once, and don't be disobliging. "

Half an hour afterwards Hamilton was in the corridor, looking for his cane, which the children had mislaid. He turned into the nursery, and while rummaging there, Madame Rosenberg joined him, and hoped he had not found his coffee too cold.

" Coffee ! no — yes ! When, where did I drink it ? "

" In your own room, " replied Madame Rosenberg, laughing. " Your memory must be very short : I sent it to you by Hildegarde about half an hour ago. "

He looked inquiringly towards Hildegarde. She raised her eyes slowly from her work, and looking at him steadily and gravely, said, in French —

" I threw it out of the window rather than take it to you. "

"Next time I advise you to drink it," said Hamilton, laughing, as he left the room with Zedwitz. While descending the stairs he observed—

"Well, that is the oddest girl I ever met, perfectly original. You have no idea how she amuses and interests me."

"I can easily imagine it," said Zedwitz, drily.

"But you can *not* imagine how intensely she hates me."

"That was what you desired, if I remember rightly; and for your sake I hope you continue as indifferent as formerly."

"Not exactly—I believe I rather feel inclined to like her unpolished sincerity, and straightforward vehemence; she really would be charming sometimes, if she were a little less quarrelsome."

"I never found her quarrelsome," said Zedwitz.

"Of course not, when you were enacting the part of adorer. That makes all the difference in the world! But what are you looking at?" asked Hamilton, seeing his companion stop short at the street door. "I see nothing but a couple of officers lounging about the windows of that brazier's shop opposite, which cannot contain anything particularly interesting, I should think."

"Did you think they were admiring the coffee-pots and candlesticks?" asked Zedwitz. "That is only a feint—I saw them looking up at the Rosenberg windows. It is a regular *window parade*, and they have been here nearly an hour, for I saw them in the street, as I entered the house. Let us cross over and see whether it be intended for Hildegarde or Crescenz."

They crossed the street, looked up, and saw Madame Berger sitting at the window, teaching Crescenz the promised pretty and strong purse-stitch. Although the latter appeared extremely intent on her work, she was evidently aware of what was passing in the street, for, as Zedwitz and Hamilton saluted, she bowed and blushed deeply.

"*She*, at least, has not yet learned to play unconscious," observed Zedwitz, laughing; "Madame Berger can give her some instruction."

"Do you know Madame Berger?" asked Hamilton.

"Of course; her husband is our physician. She is very pretty, and the greatest coquette in Christendom. I say, Raimund, what are you admiring in that shop?" said Zedwitz, stopping suddenly opposite the brazier's, and addressing one of the officers.

"The kitchen utensils, Max! I shall soon be obliged to purchase such things, and they have a kind of mysterious interest for me now."

"You don't mean to say that you are going to keep house—going to be married?"

"My father says so, which is much more to the purpose," replied Raimund.

"And who is the happy woman destined to make you a respectable member of society?"

"They tell me she lives in that house," replied Raimund, pointing to the one they had just left.

"The third story?" asked Zedwitz, quickly.

"No, Max; for a *wife* I do not look so high," replied the other, ironically.

"And when may I offer my congratulations?"

"Not just now, if you please, for, as I have never yet spoken to the lady, something might occur to prevent the thing; but I have very nearly made up my mind."

Zedwitz laughed, and walked on with Hamilton. "I hope he has told the truth," he said, musingly; "I hope he has told the truth, for I should be very sorry he made his way into the Rosenberg family. He is very clever, but a great reprobate; has already seduced two girls of respect-

able connexions, and is not ashamed to boast of his success."

"Were there no fathers, no brothers, no cousins, to compel him to make reparation?" asked Hamilton.

"As it happened, there were none," replied Zedwitz; "but even if there had been, he has not the caution-money, and could not marry. If he were serious just now, I suppose his father has discovered some rich *partie* for him, and that he will succeed, I do not for a moment doubt. He pretends to have a regular system of seduction, which consists in several gradations of improper books—it is disgusting to hear him descant on the subject."

"But he will carefully avoid anything of that kind with his future wife," said Hamilton.

"I was not thinking of his wife, for I do not know her; I fear for the Rosenbergs—Hildegard would be sure to attract him."

"He would, however, have no chance of success in that quarter, I am sure," said Hamilton.

"It is hard to say; her nature is passionate, and I should be sorry to see her an object of attention to such a man. The fact is, I find it impossible to forget her, and as long as I know

her to be free, I cannot cease to indulge hopes that she may eventually be mine. What I most apprehend is a sudden and violent passion on her part, for some person as yet, perhaps, unknown; for I believe her capable of loving desperately."

"And you very naturally wish to be the object of this desperate love? But how are you to obtain your father's consent to your union?"

"Of that I have no hope whatever; but as I am an only son I have every chance of pardon were I once married. My mother's opposition is much less violent, but quite as determined as my father's, and the astonishment of both indescribable when I confessed that I had been refused without explanation or chance of recall. All my hopes are now centred in my sister, who is a dear good little soul, and has promised to assist me when she can. By the bye, she made a remark which may, perhaps, interest you." Zedwitz stopped and looked very hard at Hamilton.

"Pray let me hear it."

"She said she was sure I should not have spoken in vain had not Hildegard loved another—"

"Well, that was your own modest idea, was it not?" said Hamilton, interrupting him.

"Yes; but it was not my idea that *you* were the object of her preference."

Hamilton laughed.

"Perhaps you are already aware of it?" asked Zedwitz, growing very red.

"No, indeed," replied Hamilton, trying to look serious, "I am only amused at your sister's strong imagination: were she, however, to see us together, and hear us speak, she would soon think differently."

"You forget that my sister was at Seon, and had opportunities of making observations."

"But she is not aware how desperately we quarrel: she does not know—"

"I have told her all that, and she insists that Hildegard likes you without being herself conscious of it."

"But I assure you she has told me more than once that she hates me."

"I am glad to hear it," said Zedwitz, drily, and immediately after he changed the subject.

This conversation, notwithstanding the little impression it had apparently made on Hamilton, took complete possession of his thoughts, as he walked home late in the evening. However incredulous he might at first have felt, the idea was too

flattering to his vanity to be lightly abandoned; and no sooner had he admitted the possibility, than it became probability; nay, almost certainty. It is extraordinary what a revolution these reflections made in his feelings. Hildegarde was so remarkably handsome that he had been compelled to admire her person;—her odd decided manners had always amused him; but now that he imagined himself so much the object of her preference as to cause her to refuse the addresses of Zedwitz, his admiration began to verge towards love; and the manners which had before caused him amusement, became the subject of deep interest, as affording a key to a mind which, with secret satisfaction, he felt he had always considered of no common stamp. Pleased with himself, and unconsciously prepared to be more than pleased with the subject of his thoughts, he bounded up the stairs, rang the bell, and was admitted by Hildegarde herself.

“Mr. Hamilton,” she said, with some embarrassment, “I wish to speak to you alone for a few minutes, if you are at leisure.”

“I am quite at leisure,” replied Hamilton, following her towards the drawing-room. She walked directly to the window, and desired him so haugh-

tilly to "shut the door," that he felt half inclined to be angry. After waiting some time in vain expectation that she would begin the conversation, he observed, with some pique at her apparent imperturbability,—

"To what extraordinary event, or to what singular good fortune, am I indebted for this interview, Mademoiselle?"

No sooner had he spoken than he perceived that her composure had been forced, that she was in fact struggling with contending emotions, and quite unable to utter a word. After some delay, she at last began in a constrained voice.

"Believe me, Mr. Hamilton, that nothing but my affection for my sister could have induced me to trespass on your time, or," she added more naturally, "subject myself to your sneers."

Hamilton remained silent, and she again commenced with evident effort. "You are aware that my sister's feelings towards you are more favourable than—"

"Than yours?" he asked, interrupting her.

"I have not requested this interview to speak of my own feelings," she answered, sternly and turning very pale. "I wish to point out to you how ungenerous, how cruel your conduct has been

to my gentle, confiding sister. You know the influence you have acquired over her—you are aware that she is on the eve of marriage with another, and that other a person she has yet to learn to love: instead of pointing out to her any estimable qualities he may possess in order to reconcile her to her fate, you turn him on all occasions into ridicule, and—and—not content with changing her indifference for her future husband into positive dislike, you take every opportunity of paying her attentions, which, knowing the state of her feelings towards you, is a refinement of cruelty that you must acknowledge to be unpardonable.”

“You speak like a book, Mademoiselle! Your affection for your sister makes you absolutely eloquent! but would it not have been better had *you* consented to marry Major Stultz, and so saved your gentle confiding sister from this unwished-for connexion? You would, no doubt, easily have learned to love him and estimate any amiable qualities he may possess!” He spoke calmly and ironically; but the idea of the beautiful creature before him, as the wife of Major Stultz, inflicted a pang of jealousy which sufficiently punished him for his impertinence. Hildegarde was perfectly unconscious of the feelings of her tor-

mentor: he had intended to have irritated her, for her self-possession wounded his vanity; while her too evident dislike cut him to the quick. He failed however for the first time, and most completely: either her affection for her sister, or the consciousness of right, prevented her from exhibiting even impatience when she again spoke.

“ You seem to have forgotten that Major Stultz’s proposal to me was made after a two days’ acquaintance. I refused him because I did not like him, and I knew it could give no pain to a man whose mere object was to have a wife to manage his household concerns. It never occurred to me that he would turn, half an hour afterward, to my sister, and that my vehemence would only serve to make him more cautious, and her fate more certain. You know he applied to my stepmother, and wrote to my father. The answer was, a letter full of reproaches to me, and of entreaties and commendations to Crescenz, which, to her yielding nature, were irresistible: and I do believe, if given time, and were you not here, she might be reconciled to her lot. However little Major Stultz may have cared for Crescenz at first, it is impossible for him to remain long indifferent to so much goodness. I think he already begins to be sin-

cerely attached to her; in time gratitude and habit will enable her to return his affection, and they may, eventually, be very happy. At all events, my sister's fate is now irrevocable."— She paused for a moment, and then added: "Oh, Mr. Hamilton, be generous! Spare her! Leave Munich—or, at least, leave our house—"

"You require a great and most unnecessary sacrifice on my part, Mademoiselle. Suppose I were able to convince you that my absence is unnecessary?"

"You cannot do so," replied Hildegard, with a slightly impatient gesture.

"I have listened to you with patience, and expect in my turn to be heard," said Hamilton, handing her a chair, which, however, she indignantly refused.

"Your sister has most probably told you—" he began.

"My sister has told me nothing," cried Hildegard, interrupting him angrily, "excepting that you said you could not marry, or even think of marriage! The conversation which preceded such a declaration I can imagine!"

"Indeed! It seems you have had experience in these matters."

Hildegarde bit her lip and tapped with her foot on the floor, while Hamilton smiled provokingly and watched her varying colour.

"Ungenerous, unfeeling Englishman!" she cried at length; "I—I see you are trying to put me into a passion—but I am not angry, not in the least, I assure you," she said, seating herself on the chair he had before placed for her. "You said," she added, in a constrained voice, "you said you were able to convince me—"

"*You* have convinced me, that you are a consummate actress!" cried Hamilton, contemptuously.

"I am no actress!" she exclaimed, starting from her chair with such violence that it fell to the ground with a loud crash. "I am no actress! For Crescenz's sake, I have endeavoured to be calm, in the hope of making some impression on you, but you are even more thoroughly selfish than I imagined. This is the last time I shall ever speak to you!"

"Don't make rash vows," said Hamilton, coolly. "I dare say you will often speak to me in time — perhaps condescend to like me!"

"Never! I do not think there exists a more unamiable being in the world than you are! I

now see you are determined not to leave our house, and only wonder I could have been such a fool as to expect you to act honourably."

Hamilton turned to the window to hide his rising colour.

"You are vindictive too," she continued, angrily, "cruelly vindictive. It is because you dislike me; it is in order to make me unhappy that you trifle with my sister's feelings. You do not, you cannot love her. She is not at all a person likely to interest a man such as you are!"

"When did you discover that?" asked Hamilton, turning suddenly round.

"No matter," she replied, moving towards the door, somewhat surprised at the effect her words had produced on him. "No matter; I see now that these conferences and quarrels are worse than useless, and—"

"I quite agree with you," said Hamilton, quickly, "and am most willing to sign a treaty of peace, on reasonable terms. Suppose I promise never by word or deed to disparage Major Stultz in future, and totally to abstain from all further attentions to your sister?"

"That—is—better—than—nothing," said Hildegarde, slowly; "and as I am acting for the

benefit of another, I ought not to refuse a compromise. If you promise," she added, hesitatingly, "I—I think I may trust you."

"And are you satisfied without my leaving the house?"

"I suppose I must be," she replied, stooping to raise the chair she had thrown down; Hamilton moved it from her, and leaning on the back of it, asked if he might not now hope, in case he conscientiously performed his promises, that she would in future be at least commonly civil to him.

"You have advised me to make no rash vows," said Hildegard. "The wisest thing we could both do would be never to look at or speak to each other again."

"Perhaps you are right," said Hamilton, gravely, "but such wisdom is too great for me—"

She left the room while he was speaking, without even looking at him.

"Zedwitz and his sister were totally mistaken," thought Hamilton; "but I am determined, since they have put it into my head, to make her like me!"

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

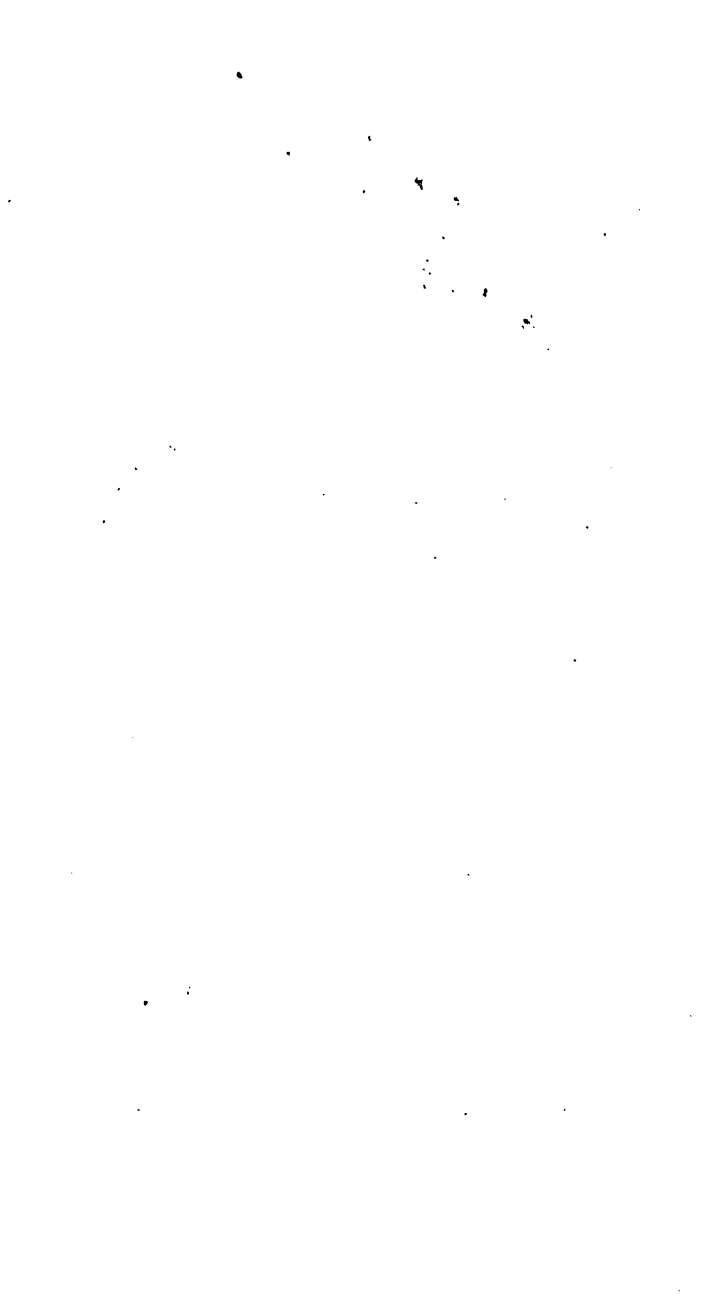


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